THE SALT OF THE EARTH

To the Library of the
Divinity School of the
University of Chicago.
from the editor.
Francis Lesueur Palmer
Professor of Divinity in
Seabury Divinity School,
Faribault, Minnesota
May 11, 1931.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Affectionately
Amos Peaslee

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

AND OTHER SERMONS

By

AMOS SKEELE, S.T.D.

Edited

With a Sketch of His Life

By

FRANCIS LESEURE PALMER

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEF ARE NOT SO MUCH THE DIFFICULTIES OF GETTING THE ASSENT OF OUR MINDS TO ITS ESSENTIAL TRUTHS, AS OF GETTING THE CONSENT OF OUR WILLS TO ITS ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES.

AMOS SKEELE.

CONTENTS

A Sketch of Dr. Skeele's Life

Sermons

Extracts from Sermons and Addresses

Extracts from Essays

Illustrations

FOREWORD

The life of Amos Skeele was that of one who did one thing and did it admirably. In the hope of helping to perpetuate the inspiration of his life and words, this volume has been prepared and is dedicated to all whom he guided to clearer thinking, to higher ideals, and to happier, more Christlike lives.

FRANCIS LESEURE PALMER.

Ascension Church Rectory, Stillwater, Minnesota.
All Saints' Day, 1920.

AMOS SKEELE

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

AMOS SKEELE came of good New England stock. On his father's side, the line was traced back to John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley, who "came over in the *Mayflower*". His mother, Huldah Morgan, was descended from Miles Morgan and Deacon Samuel Chapin, both prominent among the founders of Springfield, Massachusetts. The mother had great strength and beauty of character. She was a woman of high standards, serene faith, and gentle manners.

His father, Levi Collins Skeele, for two years Colonel of the State Militia, was a farmer. As a young man, he was said to be "the most promising and most popular man in the community", but ill health early limited his ambition and his effort, and the quiet tenor of his life may be inferred from the record that he "was born, married, and died in the same room" of the old home in Chicopee.

That house, built in 1793, was bought in 1804 by the grandfather, Dr. Amos Skeele, who, after service in the war of the Revolution, came from Connecticut to establish himself here. The name Skeele has a foreign sound, but is traced through three John Skeeles,

all of Connecticut, back to England, where the name is found in inscriptions in churches for many generations.

Dr. Skeele, the grandfather, was a man of strong character, of hopeful disposition, and of deep religious faith. For many years he was an active deacon and tithing-man in the parish. He was a highly successful doctor of the old school, and his vigorous health enabled him, when over eighty years of age, to continue a practice that took him far and wide.

The Skeele homestead was on the winding highway that led through the pleasant, elm-shaded meadowland, along the eastern bank of the Connecticut, and which was known as "Chicopee Street". It was, however, a rural community, rather than what is usually implied by the name "street". There was the meetinghouse, the schoolhouse, a store, and a tavern or two, and the street itself was part of the great coaching highway that followed the Connecticut River northward, before the coming of the railway. At that time, and for many years after, what is now Chicopee was a parish of Springfield, the town not being set apart until 1848.

The home was thus typical of Puritan New England,—a home of intelligence and refinement, of strong and open religious convictions, of daily family prayer, with constant enforcement of moral and sacred lessons. Here was born in 1833, on October 7th, Amos, the only son of Levi and Huldah. His only sister, Clarissa Elizabeth, usually known as Clara, was three years older. She was, like her brother, a remarkable per-

sonality. Before she was three, she read fluently, and a little later at school delighted her teachers by her love of study and her rapid acquirement. At the age of ten, she was already prepared for Mt. Holyoke Seminary, though naturally she did not enter until several years later.

All through their long life, brother and sister were devotedly attached to each other. They were constant correspondents, and seemed never so happy as when discussing theology or literature.

Life on the farm had many pleasures; one was the frequent drive up "Meetinghouse Lane", and by the road up the hill through the woods to the level sandy fields or "Plains" beyond, where the cattle were pastured and where the wood lots lay. The home farm was of only eight acres, but they were of rich fertile soil, running down to the river, with a depression halfway, called "The Hollow". Around and near the house grew many shade trees, elms and maples, some of great size; and there were peach trees, pear trees, quince bushes, grape vines, and a wonderful orchard of apple trees, almost too many to count. An object of constant charm was the great river, the Connecticut, here about a quarter of a mile wide, with placid, unsullied waters, its steep bank lined with basswood, chestnut, willow, birch, and other trees.

The house itself was of two stories, of the simple, dignified Colonial style common in that part of the valley. There was a central entrance, with two win-

dows to the north and two windows to the south. One great chimney occupied the center, and gave abundant space for great fireplaces in the big, cheerful rooms grouped about it. In the rear, there was an ell, with an old-fashioned woodshed. The barn stood at a little distance, not connected with the house. Even then, the big garret had begun to fill up with ancient tables, chairs, and spinning wheels; here also were chests full of old letters, papers, and clothing. If there is any pleasanter place to grow up in, it had not then been invented.

It was to a typical New England district school of the better sort that the Skeele children went for several years. Here were studied not only the lower branches, but advanced pupils were taught Algebra, Geometry, Latin, and even the rudiments of psychology, under the title, "Watts on the Mind". In the late forties, there came to the school a young teacher of exceptional ability. From his superior instruction brother and sister gained great inspiration, and always remembered Mr. Gamwell with genuine gratitude.

One large element of education was life on the farm. It was here that Amos Skeele acquired that love of nature and of physical exercise that marked his life. But farm life, though not without its attractions, did not appeal to him as a vocation.

For a time, he planned to become a teacher, and with this end in view he entered the Normal School in Westfield, then the latest experiment in education. He

found the methods then in vogue uncongenial, and his stay at the Normal School was not over a year.

While in Westfield, he was strongly impressed by the services of the little Episcopal Church. Once or twice before this, he had taken part in the worship of the Book of Common Prayer. The first service which he attended was in Chicopee, at Grace Church, and it left an indelible impression. He felt at once elements of reverence and worship which the Puritan meeting-house had never suggested, and after attending two or three services, he knew that his place was in the Episcopal Church. Presently he formed the resolution to enter the sacred ministry of that Church. For one of his antecedents, it was at that day a notable departure, and must have caused great surprise to his friends and anxious discussion at home.

For a number of years, on account of his mother's declining health, he remained on the farm, helping his father, and laying aside what he could for his education. For several years he was organist in the First Congregational Church in Chicopee, near his home. Thus he began to develop a genuine musical ability and taste which enriched his life.

In the meantime, his sister had spent two profitable years at Mount Holyoke Seminary, under the famous Mary Lyon. In 1852, Clara Skeele was married and removed to Indiana. There and in Illinois, her husband, William Randall Palmer, was active for several years in the Presbyterian ministry. He was a graduate

of Amherst College and of Windsor Theological Seminary, a man of high ability and fine literary taste.

After his mother's death, in 1856, Mr. Skeele, now past twenty-one, was able to take up his life plan. He entered Kenyon Preparatory School, at Gambier, Ohio, in the fall of 1858, and in 1860 he was able to enter Kenyon College. Kenyon was and is a small college of high rank and of unique history, under the care of the Episcopal Church. It has high ideals, and has educated many able and distinguished men.

The college years were full of happiness; with congenial studies and congenial companions, his mind and heart grew strong and large. Membership in the Psi Upsilon fraternity brought him into contact with upper classmen of ability and influence. A report from the President of the college to Mr. Skeele's father, in 1862, says: "As in time past, Amos still continues to be one of our best students in every respect; he has the entire confidence and highest esteem of the Faculty." To the end of his life, Mr. Skeele preserved a neatly written letter from Alexander V. G. Allen, informing him that he was "unanimously elected a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society". This is dated June 3, 1863.

Another college letter which he kept was from the Rev. James Kent Stone, Secretary of the Faculty, bearing date of May 31, 1864.

"I have the honor to inform you that the Faculty have assigned to you the Second Philosophical Oration as your part in the Commencement exercises of your

class. Your average grade for your college course is 9.5241."

In the fall of the same year, 1864, Mr. Skeele entered the new Divinity School in Philadelphia. Among his associates here were many men of ability. There were in the school, during his residence, graduates of Amherst, Columbia, Harvard, Hobart, Pennsylvania, Yale, and other colleges, besides several friends from Kenyon. Among his fellow-students were Henry Anstice, Frederick Brooks, James P. Franks, Reginald Heber Howe, William W. Newton, and Cortlandt Whitehead.

Life in Philadelphia was a delightful change from the rural seclusion of his boyhood and college life. Here was opportunity to visit large churches and hear distinguished men. At Holy Trinity Church, Phillips Brooks was in the midst of his work, constantly gaining power and fame, and exerting strong and helpful influence on men of such spirit as Amos Skeele. He not only heard Brooks gladly, but also formed his acquaintance and found in him a true friend.

It was then a common custom for students of many denominations to spend at least one year at Andover Theological Seminary, in order to hear the lectures of "the great Dr. Park". Accordingly Amos Skeele spent the middle year of his divinity course at Andover. It would seem to-day a questionable experiment thus to blend the teaching of schools of so different character, and in after years Mr. Skeele once said that he had

learned more from Dr. Allen's *Continuity of Christian Thought* than from all of Dr. Park's lectures.

For his senior year in theology, Mr. Skeele returned to the Philadelphia School, where he was graduated in the spring of 1867. Something of the quality of Mr. Skeele in these early years is suggested in a letter written by the late Rev. Dr. DeWitt Clark of the Tabernacle Church of Salem, Massachusetts. They had been boys together, next-door neighbors, in old Chicopee Street.

> "He was to me an 'elder brother' indeed, watching over me in childhood, and later when we were happily together at Andover Seminary. Whether riding with him at home, or walking with him over the Andover roads and hills, it was always an hour almost of romance, so apt and engaging was he as a story-teller, and later as a student of theology and philosophy."

As he approached the ministry, abundant opportunities were offered him for service. Dr. Alex. H. Vinton wished him as assistant in the mission work of his parish in New York City, while his classmate at Kenyon, the Rev. William W. Farr, tried first to get him to assist him at Sandusky, and later to go to Des Moines, Iowa; but Bishop Eastburn wrote him that he would be expected to spend his diaconate in the diocese of Massachusetts. With the Bishop's approval the parish in Milford corresponded with Mr. Skeele, and gave him a call. None of these plans matured.

On leaving for England in May, Bishop Eastburn authorized the Bishop of Rhode Island "to perform

episcopal offices" in Massachusetts until his return. So it came about that in June, 1867, Amos Skeele was ordained to the diaconate in Westerly, Rhode Island, by that most able and distinguished prelate, the Right Reverend Thomas March Clark. At the examination which preceded the ordination, one of the two other candidates aroused suspicion among the examining chaplains. "Is the young man orthodox?" "As orthodox as I am!" retorted Bishop Clark.

In some way, permission was obtained for Mr. Skeele to begin his ministry in Rhode Island, for he was at once placed in charge of the Church of the Saviour, on Benefit Street, in Providence. It was a small parish, and there were difficulties in the way of growth, but it contained many who became faithful workers and loyal friends. Mr. Skeele was advanced to the priesthood on June 30, 1868, by Bishop Clark.

The city of Providence, with its harbor, its college, and its historical associations, was full of interest, and among the clergy of the city he found congenial companions. He was invited, probably in 1870, to join the "Clericus", often called the "Phillips Brooks Club", which met once a month in Boston. On account of the expense of the trip, he reluctantly declined, but in after years he spoke with regret of this decision. Membership in the Club would have given him more intimate association with such men as Brooks, Allen, Franks, Newton, already his friends, and brought him acquaintance with other notable thinkers and leaders.

In this connection, comment should be made on the retiring nature of Mr. Skeele. He cared for no office, sought no distinction of place or rank, other than that which belonged to his ministry. But no occasion confronted him in which his friends ever saw him show weakness. He was always master of the situation. There was a natural dignity in his manner, a presence and ease in dealing with questions, that showed at once courage and modesty. In the chancel, whether at the altar or in the pulpit, he had a dignity and presence that marked him as a very ambassador of Christ. After his death, a friend and parishioner wrote of him:—

"His modesty concealed from all but his intimates the intellectual and moral qualities which are so necessary to make a great man."

It was in mission work in East Providence, to which Mr. Skeele used to go on Sunday afternoon, that he met a young lady of rarely attractive personality, Sarah Waterman Ide, daughter of William T. Ide. Miss Ide was of a Congregational family, but had volunteered to assist in the Church Sunday school. The acquaintance ripened into friendship, and on October 4, 1871, they were married in the Church of the Saviour, by the Rev. Daniel G. Anderson, rector of St. Bartholomew's Church, Cranston, R. I. A long and happy life of forty-four years together was given them.

After nine years in Providence, a change of place seemed wise, and, in the summer of 1876, Mr. Skeele accepted temporary service at St. Matthew's Church in

Worcester, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. William R. Huntington, then rector of All Saints' Church. Dr. Huntington was a rare man, an able administrator, and noted preacher, and Mr. Skeele enjoyed thoroughly their association. The following March, he went to Lawrence, to assist the Rev. William Lawrence, now Bishop of Massachusetts, under the conditions described by the bishop in a recent letter.

Bar Harbor, Maine, July 22, 1916.

. . . In 1875, I as a young deacon went as assistant of the Rev. Dr. Packard, Grace Church, Lawrence. Within a few months he died, and being called to the rectorship, I had a much larger parish and heavier burden than a young man without experience could well carry. I turned to the Rev. Dr. Huntington of Worcester for advice, and he commended to me Mr. Skeele, who had assisted him.

Mr. Skeele came to me and . . . was of great comfort and support to me. It was not an easy position for him, for he was the older man. He was, however, so modest, so single in his desire to do his best for the Church, and so excellent a pastor, that he made his own place in the parish work and as my assistant. He did to the last detail whatever he was asked to do, and through his own initiative and originality did much that would not have been thought of by me, for the help and strengthening of the parish.

Since 1877 I have heard many sermons, but remembered few as vividly as I recall his.

There was a quaintness to his style,—a transparency

> of thought and sincerity of purpose which made whatever he said real and vivid. One sermon I remember from the text, "Nothing but leaves", was very searching, and one could but feel that he was speaking out of the depths of his heart when he scorched in his quaint and vivid way the characters of those who were full of leaf and superficial glory and manner, but without real fruitage, and while he revealed the joy of a fruitful life. The memory of our work together has always been a happy one. . . .
>
> WILLIAM LAWRENCE.

On his part, Mr. Skeele always remembered with great pleasure those months of close association with one destined to fill so large a place in the Church's counsels and work.

In November, 1877, Mr. Skeele became rector of St. Paul's Church in Holyoke, Massachusetts. This was a parish of considerable strength, with a congregation and Sunday school that filled the small brown stone church. Thirty years after, one who appreciated his fine character wrote of him as follows:

> "Mr. Skeele has been the one minister of my rather long acquaintance with the profession, who has stood in my mind as one truly fitted to follow that noble calling. . . . Among the countless sermons I have happily forgotten, I remember Mr. Skeele's, though I was but a girl during his rectorate in Holyoke."

One pleasant element of his life in Holyoke was that his boyhood home in Chicopee was only three miles away. His daily walks for exercise brought him there

EPIPHANY CHURCH, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

frequently, a most welcome visitor. At this time there were in the home, his sister and her invalid husband, and their two younger children, then attending the high school. To them as well as to the two older nephews, now away from home, he was an ideal uncle, of unfailing kindness and inimitable humor. Their occasional visits to Holyoke, as at Confirmation, or at Christmas, when the Gothic church was beautiful with evergreens, were red-letter days, never to be forgotten.

After four years of faithful service in the Holyoke parish, there came to Mr. Skeele a larger opportunity. Through his friend, Phillips Brooks, his name was suggested to the Church of the Epiphany in Rochester, New York, that was seeking a rector. Two members of the parish, Gen. J. H. Martindale, the Senior Warden, and George E. Mumford, a Vestryman, made the journey to Holyoke to make Mr. Skeele's acquaintance and attend service. In a letter dated March 22, 1881, a formal call was given, and on Easter, April 18th, Mr. Skeele entered on what was to be his great life work.

Amos Skeele had now been nearly fourteen years in the active ministry, and had developed rare qualities of mind and heart. He impressed all as a gentleman of remarkable refinement, quiet in bearing, modest, sympathetic. In the chancel he spoke with great distinctness, yet without effort. His reading of the service was of wonderful beauty and impressiveness. Through all his ministry, it was his practice, before officiating, to read aloud in his study both service and sermon. His

pulpit delivery was admirable. Though he followed the words of his manuscript closely, he was never hampered by it, being perfectly familiar with its contents. There was in his modes of expression a charming originality, and in his thought a spiritual insight, that made the sermon the message of a prophet. There was also a rare, delicate humor, bringing flashes of illumination and wisdom. His vigorous mind never repeated platitudes. Constant philosophic meditation gave him ability to express his thoughts in strong and original ways. Such a mind and such a character are not appreciated by all, but discerning friends, and these were many, learned to trust, to admire, and to love him.

Epiphany parish was founded in 1869, as a mission of old St. Luke's, to minister to the homes of a rapidly growing section of the city. In that year, a brick church, plain and substantial, costing $14,000, was erected on Jefferson Avenue. In 1876, the parish was formally organized, and the Rev. Charles M. Nickerson was its first rector. On the following Epiphany, January 6, 1877, the church was consecrated by Bishop Coxe. Mr. Nickerson continued as rector until New Year's Day, 1881.

When Mr. Skeele assumed charge, Epiphany parish was still almost a mission church, for its congregation was made up largely of members of very limited means. It was fortunate in having several active Churchmen from other parishes, who transferred their membership here, to help establish the work.

In 1882, a recess chancel with a beautiful window, in memory of Mrs. George E. Mumford, was added to the church, and the congregation provided a fine pipe organ. Under the care of Mr. George H. Yeares, first as organist, and afterwards also as choirmaster, a notable vested choir of men and boys was developed, whose ability and fidelity were an unfailing joy and support to Mr. Skeele. It was his practice as rector to choose the hymns with great care, keeping lists for years, so that the best and most suitable hymns and tunes might be provided for each service. He would sometimes remark of a selection: "I don't care much for those words, but the choir boys love to sing that hymn."

Epiphany Rectory had been built in 1874. It was of brick to match the church, and was pleasantly placed near the church with evergreen trees around it. Mr. Skeele took the front room for his study, and arranged there his well-chosen library. At one end was a grate, where a cheerful coal fire was always burning in cold weather. On the walls were photographs of cathedrals that had specially interested him in his travels.

His first journey across the water was made in 1883. He sailed from New York on the last day of June, on the White Star steamship *Germania,* accompanied by the Rev. John W. Greenwood, for many years rector of Trinity Church, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Mr. Skeele landed at Queenstown, and made the usual journey from Cork to Dublin. Crossing to Holyhead, he went through Wales to Chester, and up to the English Lakes,

thence to Edinburgh and the Scott Country. Then followed a glorious cathedral tour—Durham, Ripon, York, Lincoln, Peterborough, and Ely.

In London he rejoined Mr. Greenwood, and they went together to Antwerp, Brussels, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Cologne. From there Mr. Skeele went on alone to Mainz, Heidelberg, Strassburg, Basel, and Lucerne. He found Swiss scenery "beyond what I had imagined. I do not think it can be pictured or described in language."

Returning by way of Paris and Rouen, he crossed from Dieppe to Newhaven, and visited Winchester and Salisbury on his way to London. From London he made trips to Canterbury and Oxford, and on his way to Liverpool he visited Stratford, Warwick, and Kenilworth. On September 6th, he sailed for New York, having had a most delightful and inspiring experience, of which his letters gave charming description. Among the things on which he dwelt were the English Cathedrals, English Church Music, and the life and customs of other lands.

Three years later, Mr. Skeele made a second voyage, this time with his wife and her sister Althea. They were gone nearly three months and visited England, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and France. Three weeks were spent in London in apartments in Half Moon Street, Piccadilly. Almost every day he would visit Westminster Abbey, which he specially loved, and each Sunday he heard Canon Liddon at

St. Paul's, and would also hear Canon Farrar at St. Margaret's, or other distinguished preachers at the Abbey, or Temple, or elsewhere. He used to describe Liddon as in many respects the most remarkable preacher he had ever heard, being able to hold his great audience for an hour to a profound theological discourse.

It was perhaps this interest in foreign travel that led Mr. Skeele, soon after going to Rochester, to take up again the study of the German language. He received help in its pronunciation from a well-qualified tutor, and, having reviewed the grammar, he was soon reading German literature with facility and delight. German theology, as found in Schleiermacher and Ritschl, made strong appeal to him, and until his death German books, classic and recent, were always at hand.

London *Punch* was a great favorite, and he kept files of it covering many years. He once remarked, "First I read *Punch,* then the *Nation,* then the *Churchman.*" Another highly prized publication was the *Biblical World.* Having the use of the large theological library at Rochester Theological Seminary, he was able to keep abreast of modern thought. He was always a student, thinking constantly on what he read, with a mind keen to separate wheat from chaff.

In 1889, the capacity of the church was nearly doubled by the building of a large transept, planned to form part of a large stone church. Connected with the transept were rooms serving as a parish house. Epiphany parish had grown steadily in numbers and was a

genuine working church. Its various organizations were active and faithful, with efficient officers. Oldest of all was the Woman's Missionary Society, which at first worked for the poor of the parish, but later became associated with the Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions. The Girls' Friendly Society, organized in 1894, entered upon a most interesting and useful work, in which Mr. Skeele took the greatest interest. Other organizations arose as need suggested, among them a men's club, which developed into a strong and helpful body. Of noteworthy character was the Sunday school. With competent teachers and workers, it was at times the largest Church school in the city, and its Lenten missionary offerings were often among the largest in the diocese.

As a preacher, Mr. Skeele had developed consistently and to a remarkable degree. His methods and his message were his own. It was his practice to write and rewrite a sermon many times, and he did not hesitate to repeat a sermon frequently. Regular worshippers would often recognize a favorite text, and would be glad to follow again a skillful line of argument on which he had spent years of thought, and which he had just brought into better form. In his later years, Dr. Skeele sometimes spoke from notes only, as at Lenten services, or on special occasions, but he preferred to use a manuscript carefully written and perfectly familiar. He never *read* a sermon but always preached it as a living message. He was often urged to publish a volume of

his sermons, but he was never persuaded to do so.

If inquiry be made as to Dr. Skeele's theology and Churchmanship, it is enough to say that Coleridge, Maurice, Allen, and Brooks were his teachers. Obscurantism he abhorred, and equally he avoided the error of those who destroy foundations and have no power to build up. The impression one got from Dr. Skeele's sermons was one of profound reality,—the reality of God. The supreme thing in life is to see things as God sees them, and to live as God's children. In "the mind of Christ" is revealed to us the mind of God, and Jesus is to us the very revelation of God. It is far more important to be like Christ than to have a technically perfect theology. Believing in Christ is not believing certain things about Him; it is getting Christ's spirit into our lives. Perhaps the text that best summed up his teaching was: "Unless a man have the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

However imperfectly this summary expresses Dr. Skeele's thought, it suggests some aspects of the Christian living on which he was always laying emphasis. The message was illuminating, and of constructive character. Those who heard were encouraged in their warfare against evil, and built up in the faith. His kindly humor helped his hearers to view many things in their true perspective, and his sublime philosophy showed the way to genuine faith and to Christlike living. Inspiring, transfiguring all was love;—the love of God, the love of Christ, the love of man for man and for God.

To many, the message from Epiphany pulpit was that of a prophet of the living God. In the years when some feeble thinkers said that the sermon was of slight value, Dr. Skeele put his best power into his preaching, with the result that many parishioners were attracted to the Church of the Epiphany, because they heard there words of spirit and of life. It was indeed "the Sacrament of Preaching" full of inward and spiritual grace.

In 1888, there was founded in Rochester a notable theological and philosophical society entitled the Alpha Chi, that is, *Adelphoi Christianoi,* or the Christian Brethren. It is composed of clergymen of various denominations, the membership being usually limited to fifteen. To be chosen to membership indicated that one was able, scholarly, progressive. In 1897, Mr. Skeele received election and for seven years was an active and valued member. It gave him delightful association with congenial spirits and opportunity for the expression of his more philosophical thinking. He prepared and read essays on the following themes: "Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*"; "Articles of Faith"; "Evidences of Immortality from Psychical Phenomena"; and "Harnack's *What is Christianity?* Is his Answer Sufficient?" In the preparation of these and similar essays, Mr. Skeele read widely, and kept notebooks in which his plan and argument were carefully worked out. It is interesting to note that his essay on Psychical Research was written nearly twenty years before the popular interest in the subject.

Apart from occasional sermons and letters in the newspapers, Dr. Skeele published nothing except three sermons in separate pamphlet form. The earliest was preached on the fourteenth of November, 1886, from Revelation 21: 16. "And the city lieth four square, and the length is as large as the breadth. . . . The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." It is a plea for symmetry in the Church, an admirable statement of the historic position of the Episcopal Church. It keenly points out the marks of sectarianism, whether without or within our own Communion.

Another philosophical sermon was delivered on Trinity Sunday, May 28, 1893, and was printed by request. Its text is the first verse of Genesis. It is a powerful argument against any mechanical conception of the Trinity, and an endeavor to express the Christian doctrine of God.

> "God over us, God with us, God within us, that is the Trinity that Christ offers to our acceptance. The true doctrine of the Trinity is not a demand to believe something for which we do not even possess the faculties for getting an intelligent apprehension of what the thing is which we are supposed to believe, but it is this, that we receive God in all the fulness of His revelation, as our Father, Friend, and Sanctifier."

A memorial sermon of great beauty was preached February 11, 1894, at the dedication of the brass pulpit in memory of Dr. Jonas Jones. It is from the text St. John 12: 24: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the

ground and die, it abideth alone." There is here a most poetical interpretation of nature, and the endeavor to look at both life and death as Jesus has taught us. Each of these sermons is "clear-cut as a cameo", a phrase applied to Dr. Skeele's literary style by the late Rev. Dr. Rob Roy McGregor Converse. Each sermon is a little classic.

Dr. Skeele's mental vigor was shown not only in his writings, but in his ordinary conversation. No comment made at the time of his death was more truly appreciative than that in an editorial in the Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle* (Wednesday, Nov. 10, 1915):

> "Many admirable lessons might be drawn from the life of the late Rev. Amos Skeele, D.D. . . . Attention has well been called to his broad and generous nature, his simplicity and modesty, his unostentatious courage and his scholarship; but he had another quality that is by no means common, and that ought not to pass without remark: though he reached a ripe old age, he retained that quality of mental youthfulness that keeps one in touch with one's day and is the prime condition of progress.
>
> "The young, on slight acquaintance, might have had little expectation of finding in Dr. Skeele a companionable spirit, but he was a delightful and profitable friend of thoughtful youth. On this phase of his character it has been said that 'after a few minutes' conversation with him there was created in one a desire to meet him often'. He was abreast of the thought of the time; his mind was not a field set about with hard and uninviting

limits; he had a fine consideration and deference for the opinions of others. He gave one precisely the opposite impression to that produced on one young mind by Coleridge in his declining years, and thus expressed: 'He was old and preoccupied, and could not bend to a new companion and think with him.'

"In speaking of the honored dead, one has warrant in recalling the example of that perennial youth, Socrates—young in spirit when he drank the hemlock, and still so after the lapse of many centuries. At the close of the *Laches,* in which the education of the young is discussed, Socrates says:

" 'But I cannot advise that we remain as we are. And if anyone laughs at us for going to school at our age, I would quote to them the authority of Homer, who says that "modesty is not good for a needy man." Let us then, regardless of what may be said of us, make the education of the youths our own education.'

"And here is the charming answer of the aged Lysimachus: 'I like your proposal, Socrates; and, as I am the oldest, I am also the most eager to go to school with the boys.'

"Unlike the great majority of us, Dr. Skeele's mind never closed against the acquisition of knowledge. . . . He was a student throughout life. In a real sense, he was always 'eager to go to school with the boys.' "

From his student days, Mr. Skeele had made it his fixed practice to take daily exercise by walking if possible ten miles or more in the country. This practice he maintained with rare exceptions, until the perfection of the safety bicycle. This he found enabled him to ex-

plore new roads and lanes, and for several years, if the weather at all permitted, he would set out on his bicycle for his daily constitutional. The coming of the automobile took away both the safety and the pleasure of this use of the bicycle, and in his later years he resumed his walks, but was satisfied with shorter excursions. It was his yearly custom to visit his sister in Chicopee. His coming brought inspiration to that home, and he drew refreshment as he walked again along the old familiar paths.

As a parish priest, Mr. Skeele fulfilled the high standard of the English Church as set forth in Chaucer's *Prologue*, and in George Herbert's *A Priest to the Temple*. He was a most faithful and impartial visitor, going the rounds of his large parish usually twice a year, and making very frequent, but very short, visits to the sick. Rarely are the offices of pastor and preacher so faithfully administered by one person.

In all the work of the parish, Mrs. Skeele took the greatest interest, and, so far as her health permitted, busied herself in various forms of Church activities. She was very helpful as a parish visitor, and for many years was active in the primary department of the Sunday school. Mrs. Skeele was also not only an appreciative listener to her husband's sermons, which he regularly read to her before delivering them, but she was also a most helpful critic, quick to approve what was specially original or inspiring.

For several years those who passed by the rectory in

pleasant weather would be apt to see an immense white cat,—the rector's pet and pride. He was named Kempenfelt, after the British Admiral of Cowper's poem, *The Loss of the Royal George.* Kempenfelt cared little for the attentions or friendship of others, but between him and Mr. Skeele there was genuine affection, and there was great grief at the rectory when Kempenfelt was no more.

In the summer of 1896, Mr. Skeele made his third and last voyage to England. He went as guest of Mr. Robert Matthews, a merchant of Rochester, sailing from New York, June 11th, on the *Normannia,* landing at Plymouth. Mrs. Matthews accompanied her husband. The gentlemen had their bicycles with them, and were thus able to see a great deal of rural England. They would make some comfortable inn their headquarters, and visit places of interest in the neighborhood; occasionally Mrs. Matthews would join them by carriage at some rendezvous. In this way a week was spent at Bath, another at Hyde Park, and a third at Leamington, visiting Stratford-on-Avon, Coventry, Kenilworth, Banbury, and Stoneleigh Abbey. From Oxford they toured to Henley, witnessing the famous regatta, and then visited Cambridge. Scarborough and Durham were the next centers, and then a delightful week was spent at Edinburgh, from which they covered the Scott Country. A most interesting fortnight in the English Lakes enabled them to visit this charming region far and wide, their longest bicycle tour being from Gras-

mere around Windermere. At Grasmere they saw the famous sports, including the Hounds' Race and the Guides' Race. They next visited the New Forest, and finally Winchester and vicinity. The cyclometer then showed that they had covered 1,225 miles on their bicycles in England. They sailed from Liverpool on the *Umbria* near the close of August.

Mr. Matthews, in a letter written since Dr. Skeele's death, says of him:

> "I found him most companionable, because of the interest we both took in philosophical subjects. His was an open and keen mind, and his training in college and the ministry supplemented his love of truth. There were enough differences of opinion between us to make discussions on all subjects interesting, but also so much identity of sentiment as to result in good conversation."

At Easter, 1906, Mr. Skeele celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his rectorship. The appreciative comment of a Rochester newspaper deserves to be quoted here:

> "Twenty-five years ago Rev. Amos Skeele came to Rochester to begin what was to be his long and successful rectorate at the Church of the Epiphany. On the evening of Easter Monday parishioners gathered in the parish house to offer their congratulations and felicitations to the rector whose ministry has meant the spiritual gain and temporal prosperity of the church. It has been a quarter of a century of peace and prosperity. It was in appreciation of this, as well as in appreciation

of the rector as a man, that the members of the Church gathered.

"Before the annual parish meeting the company was received at an informal reception at the rectory by Mr. and Mrs. Skeele. On behalf of the parishioners, George A. Carnahan spoke of the high value which the members of the Church placed upon their association with their rector and his wife, and of the spiritual benefit that had come to them under his ministry. Though the speech was brief, it was full of expressions of the friendship and affection in which the rector is held by his church."

One loyal parishioner, absent from the city at the time, sent a letter of congratulation in which she said:

"I think once in twenty-five years one should be allowed to express one's honest convictions, so I am going to give myself the pleasure of saying that I am sure that no parish in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, has so desirable a rector as the Church of the Epiphany in Rochester."

It is impossible for the writer of this sketch to name the many devoted workers in the parish,—Wardens, Vestrymen, teachers in the Sunday school, members of the guilds and choir, loyal parishioners and friends,—whose whole-souled fidelity gave unfailing encouragement and support in the difficult tasks of over a third of a century. In the sermon in memory of Dr. Jones, Mr. Skeele mentions "those whose names are upon these memorial windows, William S. Oliver, George E. Mumford, Alfred Wright, and others too like Romeyn Boughton, David Fairman, Frederic Bergh, and Gen-

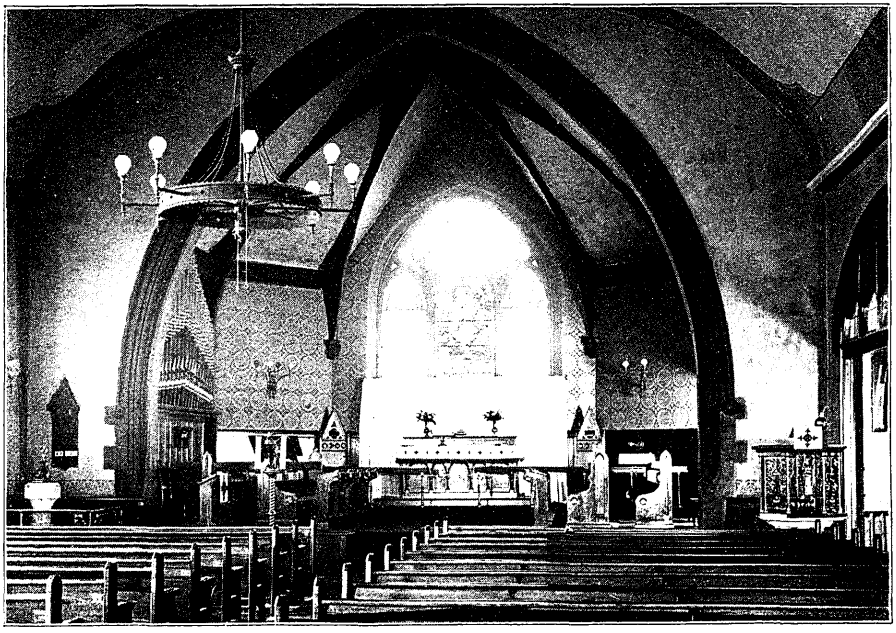
eral Martindale, all in their day, except one, members of our Vestry, and all devoted in their service to this Church." Another name may be added, that of the distinguished historian and statesman, the honorable James Breck Perkins, who for years was a highly valued friend.

In 1908, there came to Amos Skeele a mark of recognition which brought even more joy to his friends than to himself,—the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology from Hobart College. The title of Doctor is sometimes bestowed upon those signally lacking in scholarship, as a recognition of position, or of faithful service. To Doctor Skeele the title was fittingly awarded, not only for long and notable service, but for sound theological learning and scholarship.

Prominence as a clergyman Dr. Skeele always avoided, but no one had a higher sense of the dignity of the minister of Christ. Diocesan gatherings did not appeal to him, and he was often absent from them. In the city, he took his part in movements for the common good, speaking at the United Lenten Services at St. Luke's, or welcoming the Choir Festival or the Girls' Friendly Society to the Epiphany. On account of Mrs. Skeele's growing deafness, he declined invitations which otherwise he might have accepted. Some even of his friends looked upon him as almost a recluse; he was not that, but certainly he did keep

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

His sense of worth forbade his prizing what many



EPIPHANY CHURCH, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

prized. He had resources in his own spirit which made him prefer to keep the noiseless tenor of his way.

In two famous ecclesiastical trials, Mr. Skeele took the unpopular side, that of the defendant. The first was a good many years ago, the case of the Rev. Howard MacQueary of Ohio, who was deposed in 1891 for his views on the Virgin Birth. Mr. Skeele had some correspondence with Mr. MacQueary, and attended the trial. The second case is still fresh in the memory of many in Rochester, that of the Rev. Dr. A. S. Crapsey.

In his early ministry at St. Andrew's, it is probable that the good Doctor looked askance upon the rector of the Epiphany as lacking sound Churchmanship. When, after a surprising change of views, Dr. Crapsey was on trial for heresy, he found in Dr. Skeele a sympathetic and courageous friend, anxious that formal orthodoxy should not be vindicated at the sacrifice of the spirit of Christ. In neither of these cases did Dr. Skeele assume that the theological opinions of the defendant were to be accepted as faultless, nor did he bring the controversy into the pulpit. He was not contending for or against a certain interpretation of the Creed, but he was anxious, then as always, that worthy Christian character should be recognized as of supreme importance, and that "the liberty of a Christian man" should not be impaired.

When Mr. Skeele came to Rochester, the Bishop of Western New York was the famous Arthur Cleveland Coxe, then in the midst of his long episcopate; in 1896, Bishop Coxe died, and the Rt. Rev. William David

Walker of North Dakota was elected to the position. With both bishops, Dr. Skeele was in cordial and friendly relations, and both learned to appreciate his unusual Christian character and unfailing loyalty.

Dr. Skeele's attitude toward life, his convictions on the matters of controversy in the Church, his views on Biblical criticism, are admirably shown in his correspondence. His quiet humor, his progressive sympathies, his firm hold on the eternal realities of Christ's Gospel, mark these letters, as may be seen in the few quotations for which there is here space.

Rochester, N. Y., April 3, 1893

It is always easy for a clergyman to say he is busy. I am sure that of late occupation has been constant. For more than three weeks, I have preached every day but three, and last week (Holy Week) twice a day. For one who prepares as slowly as I do, that keeps me closely at work. I preached a week and a half at St. Paul's Church daily, and though I took only old sermons yet I rewrote them just as far as time permitted. I did nothing those days but write and preach. I had to sit right down as soon as I came home from morning service, and work till towards night on my next day's sermon. Then I would not feel like going to church evenings or doing anything but light reading. Then in the morning get up and read over my sermon, go over and preach it at ten o'clock, and then right back at work on the next one. I was glad last week to get back to Epiphany. We had excellent congregations. Easter was very pleasant every way.

I have to make a good many addresses, if they are "ordinary". I know well enough what they are,—and I never make one if I can help it to any but my own congregation. They must put up with them, for I can not begin to write out all the things I want to say to them.

I talked last week about Sacrifice, using many of Maurice's thoughts. A few weeks ago, I talked to my confirmation class, just telling them the story of *A Man without a Country,* and applying it to "a person without a Church". That seemed to interest them. . . .

I do not see as there is much to preach except ethics or morals. Incidentally, that is everything. But the mark, call it preaching the Gospel, or preaching Christ, or whatever term is applied, is the elevation of character. I believe people can sometimes teach music, who do not themselves play. They can have some success in teaching painting, who do not themselves paint, though I should think this teaching would lack something. But I do not think a man can preach rightly who does not himself aim high. Still, as for preaching ahead of one's living, I suppose Raphael would have taught an ideal beyond his power to paint. Certainly there is nothing below ideal excellence to preach, and the preacher's ideals must always be away beyond him. It does not invalidate one's preaching if he is a little "compassed with infirmity", so it is not too much, and so he is always trying to improve in character.

Rochester, N. Y., July 3, 1894.

This hot weather I am reading Fiske's *Cosmic Philosophy.* I want to get my philosophy all right, if possible.

I read Fiske's *Life of Youmans* lately. That is an interesting book. There is a good article in the *New World* for June on Episcopalianism by W. Kirkus. W. Kirkus is a sprightly writer. . . . I find Prof. Harper's publication, the *Biblical World,* quite interesting. Sometimes he seems to be very conservative in his use of terms, *e. g.,* I do not see why he should say the story of the Creation is "not a myth". He admits it to be that which corresponds with the dictionary definition of a myth.

Rochester, N. Y., February 21, 1895.

. . . I wrote Dr. Allen lately telling him of my appreciation of his new work, *Religious Progress.* His reply seemed to indicate much pleasure at my letter. He was very hearty in his thanks. I observed that he too is annoyed at the Pastoral. I suppose he considered it a fling at the Cambridge School. A copy of the *Standard* was sent me containing Mr. Bartlett's criticism of the Pastoral. I was so pleased with it that I wrote a few lines to Mr. B. thanking him for his very judicious letter. He replied that "a number of very prominent clergymen" had written approving his letter. He wished they had said the same things themselves. So did I. I should enjoy expressing my views, but I could not expect to get them printed. The *Standard* would not print my letter about the MacQueary case, and I could not expect my views of the Pastoral to be any more pleasing to them.

Rev. Mr. Soper, formerly of Rochester, Congregationalist, wrote me last week, making very earnest inquiry as to what that voice out of the fifteenth century

meant. He desired me to write him all about the significance of the Pastoral. Mrs. Whiting of Holyoke unburdened her mind the other day about the Pastoral. People are inclined to attach too much significance to the Pastoral. They do not distinguish the broad difference between a Papal Bull and such an effusion as that. Of course the Pastoral is just what is to be expected from such men. It is vexatious that such a person as S—— should have been allowed to have any hand in preparing a Pastoral at all.

No doubt very dangerous tendencies are manifest that threaten the well-being of the Church. One of the principal of these is the alarming disposition to emphasize unduly things which have no immediate bearing on the spiritual health of anybody. The minds of the flock are drawn away from those things that bear directly on the salvation of their souls, and distracted with matters of dogma. Dogmas, some of them, like that of the miraculous Birth—however true—are not the most important, are not vital truths of the Gospel. That this is not vital is evident from the fact that Christ Himself seems to have said nothing about it, though He preached the Gospel to some extent. Also, St. Paul says nothing about it, though he, too, tried to preach the Gospel some. Also, that "greatest of all the Church Councils", the Nicene, though endeavoring to state the essentials of faith, omitted to mention that point.

Attention should be called to the great stress that the ordination service lays on the duty of priests to study the Sacred Scriptures. The evident lack of such study is very alarming, as manifest in the uncritical and un-

skillful use of Scripture texts on the part of prominent prelates. It is high time something was done about this disregard of solemn vows "to be diligent in such studies as help to a knowledge of the same", and to teach nothing as necessary to salvation, except what may be proved thereby. There seems to be a lack of honesty and loyalty that is truly alarming, and then that there are some bishops who "love to have it so" is too dreadful to contemplate. Of course our ordination vows teach us that none can be "truth-receivers" who are not "truth-seekers".

I find Driver's *Introduction* a useful book.

Rochester, N. Y., October 13, 1896.

I suppose Dr. Gordon's book is the thing for me to read. You see that "Christocentric" view is attacked by a writer in the September *New World* (Dole). I don't know as I could answer effectively, just now, every thing that Dole says, but I can see very well that the Christocentric view is a conception of God that will help our people a great deal more than Unitarianism. Unitarianism has much excellent truth, but it has not seemed to be what was needed for the average man.

Rochester, May 5, 1896.

I have not read the preface to the new edition of *Continuity*. From the sentence you quote, I perceive the position of Dr. Allen. Without knowing anything in particular about Augustine's philosophy, it seems as though the doctrines that are specially Augustinian were not based on the conception of God as immanent. His

teaching concerning "depravity" for example, and "infant damnation".

About the middle of March the snow was piled up almost as high as the fence, but a few warm days toward the end of the month lowered it, and the last day of March my eyes rejoiced to see a few little crocus blooms south of my study window, and I managed to sow a drill of sweet peas the same day. I have as yet but very few spring flowers. I however have a bicycle, which is quite a different thing, yet answers the same purpose so far as taking my time and attention goes. I spend an hour or two with it every day. Once in a while I make it useful for a call or an errand, but generally I ride for amusement and exercise, and go on foot when I make parish calls.

Rochester, N. Y., March 21, 1899.

. . . We have staying with us this month a little black dog, who belongs to Mrs. George Perkins. He is like the little dog in the verses, "With his tail cut short, and his ears cut long". He is a very lively creature, a lady's lap dog, and has to have a leash attached to his collar, when he goes out for exercise. He dragged Aunt Sarah down the street and back again this morning in about half the time it would commonly take to perform the journey. I decline to go about the streets leading a lap dog. Aunt Sarah has to do most of that. He, however, sleeps on my bed, and picks bones in my study, barks furiously when anyone ventures to ring the bell, and howls like an Irish wake when the church bell rings. I like dogs, but I love cats.

Forest Lawn, N. Y., July 20, 1901.

Things are as usual at our lake shore cottage. Lake Ontario has its various moods. Sometimes it gets excited, and then it calms down and only makes a low, whispering sound. The spirit that inhabits it is changeable. It has distinct individuality—same as anybody.

Rochester, N. Y., April 27, 1904.

. . . . We had a very good attendance on Good Friday night, larger it seemed to me than on any Good Friday night before. There was a large number of communicants on Easter. I believe I administered to over 300.

The Bishop was here last Sunday night and confirmed twenty-three, and exhorted them. . . . He wound up by telling them how he always liked to come to this church; always had a good congregation, and a good confirmation class, and the rector was a first-rate chap.

The Bishop told me a good story about Dr. Washburn, rector of Calvary Church, New York, at the time of his death, more than twenty-five years ago. His first parish was Newburyport. They had the old style of pews and a "three decker". They concluded to modernize the church and sold the old pews to the carpenter who had the contract. As the rector was walking in the fields one day, his attention was arrested by a peculiar looking object. Proceeding to investigate he found the carpenter had made a sheep pen out of the old pews. At a parish gathering that evening, Dr. Washburn took occasion to relate what he had that day seen. The assembly was horror-struck at the thought of such sacrilegious treatment of those pews. "But, stop a minute!" said the

Doctor. "When I saw those pews with those sheep, I thought to myself: There was never so much innocence in them before."

Forest Lawn, N. Y., September 23, 1904.

(From a long philosophical letter—in answer to an inquiry—discussing the teachings of Ritschl, Kant, Schleiermacher, Plato, Kaftan, Inge, Orr, etc.)

I suppose that the objection as to the subjectivity of faith's perceptions arises in part from forgetting that all perceptions—those of the material senses as well—are subjectively mediated. The objectivity of these perceptions may be denied. We can never reach the highest knowledge by standing on the steps of science or philosophy, or any kind of mere *Wissenschaft*,—but it is the revelation of reality to the faith perception.

This is what Plato did not know, neither did the Greek Fathers or the Scholastics, and the Traditionalists of to-day ignore this fact. It does not sound altogether new to say that there is no assurance of the objectivity of these supposed revelations, except what is given to faith. It sounds like some statements in the New Testament.

It may be deemed Mysticism, but the Mysticism that conflicts with the conception of the Christian faith as implying moral action is what Ritschlians object to. You know Mysticism has flourished in paganism as well as in Christian societies. What was known as Mysticism aimed to get out of finite limitations into the Absolute. Union with the Infinite, or absorption into the Universal Mind, this was its aim. . . .

Against the whole race of these mystics (whose char-

acteristics were rapture, ecstasy, self-hypnotism) Ritschlians assert and insist with all emphasis that communion with God is alone in the practical, moral life. Communion with God is not found in fleeing from the world, and in idle contemplation, but is through that sort of faith that takes up its duties in the world.

Rochester, N. Y., Feb. 6, 1905.

I was glad to hear of your Epiphany festivities. We have none like them. Our principal observance is a missionary meeting in one of the large churches where all the Sunday schools unite.

We have our Christmas tree at Epiphany every year. A confectioner who belongs to the parish gives us the candy nicely put up in boxes. We had 387 boxes this year. . . . Miss Wood takes the care of the school off my shoulders. She runs it better than I could and it is a great relief. The school was never quite so full as now, nor in so good condition.

Rochester, N. Y., April 12, 1905.

I do not know what will be the outcome of Dr. Crapsey's case. He preached for me last Friday evening, and is to come again this week,—volunteered of his own accord to come. I talked with him about his prospects. He had had an interview with the Bishop, in which he said the Bishop behaved like a gentleman. He is to publish his lectures in a book, modifying some passages at the Bishop's suggestion.

Later, pressure was brought to bear upon the Bishop to bring the case to trial. . . . I was sorry Dr. Crapsey stated that about Christ's nature in a way so offensive

to the conservative mind. But it's Crapsey's way to be extreme in any direction he takes. I said to him: "You believe in Christ's divinity, just the same as the rest of us." "Certainly I do. I state it in those lectures." He preached a grand and eloquent sermon the other evening: "Christ's Priesthood of Service." "A Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

Rochester, N. Y., June 13, 1910.

Your mother [Dr. Skeele's sister] is not quite so strong as she used to be—alas! alas! The wheels of time will go right on and results are inevitable. But your mother's intellectual powers are no less than they ever were. There is just the same bright mind that she had when she was my loving sister "Crissa".

Rochester, March 19, 1912.

The publishers of *Richard Meynell* were so gracious as to send me a copy. Of course I was much interested. I was asked if there were a large number of the English clergy of whom he was a representative, that is, men who would wish to go so far in altering the Church service. I hardly thought so. I would like an improved Psalter, and I would like to modify some phrases of the Creed.

I do not for myself desire much change in the general conduct of worship. I would, indeed, give freedom to those who desire it for extemporaneous prayer, that is, more freedom. I do not desire it for myself. But I am old and old-fashioned. If there is anything on earth more beautiful than the Episcopal service was to me when I first knew it, I should like to know what and

where. That was when the minister wore a long surplice and during the hymn went out and reappeared in a black silk gown and bands like those we see in ancient pictures.

In 1913, Dr. Skeele quietly passed his eightieth birthday. He had now been rector of the Church of the Epiphany for thirty-two years. His mind was as keen as ever, and his strength still equal to the usual ministrations and to much parish visiting. Out of consideration for his advancing age and the growth of the work, the parish had persuaded him a few years before to have a curate. The experiment was not entirely happy; the curate was given abundant opportunity to preach, but the parish register shows that Dr. Skeele continued to do practically all the work. He was glad to have the curate depart and leave him unhampered.

The statistics printed in the Diocesan Journal show that at this time Epiphany parish included 260 families, with over 750 souls. The record for the year shows Baptisms, 19; Confirmations, 34; Marriages 21; and Burials 30. About this time the serial number of marriages reached 500, and that of Baptisms 1,000. The Sunday school reports 36 officers and teachers, and 335 pupils, ranking second in size in the city.

Only exceptional health and vigor enabled the venerable clergyman to continue in charge of so large a work. Probably few realized at all his great age; his hair was still dark brown, with scarcely a trace of gray, and his appearance was that of a vigorous man in the sixties. He was conscious, however, that the time was approach-

ing, when he must retire, but the thought was full of pain. He had no children to plan for or to cheer his age; his dear sister had died in 1911. His interests were in Epiphany parish; here was his home, his life.

It was at the close of 1914, that his active service came to an end. On a Sunday morning, just before Christmas, he was missed at church, and friends who called found that he had had an apoplectic stroke. He rallied from the attack, but it was learned that he had Bright's disease, and he realized that his ministry was ended. His resignation was given to the Vestry, who kindly arranged that it should date from the next Easter, so that he might complete his thirty-fourth year as rector of the parish. He was also given the status of Rector Emeritus. He was able after some months to appear again in the chancel, but never again to enter the pulpit.

For many years, Dr. and Mrs. Skeele had maintained a pleasant summer home on the very shore of Lake Ontario, at Forest Lawn. It was near enough to permit him to come to town for the morning service through the summer. This summer, he did not feel equal to removing to the lake, and as a new rector had not yet come, he was kindly permitted to remain in the rectory. It was fitting and beautiful that the end should come to him here among his books and near to the sanctuary which he loved so well. He died on the fifth of November, 1915, at the age of eighty-two. He had been a priest of the Church for over forty-seven years, and

for several years was senior among his brethren in the city.

The daily press of Rochester spoke with discrimination and true appreciation of his notable service, his fine personal character and ability, and his genuine scholarship, and literary taste. Multitudes of many denominations, young and old, often in groups and families, many of them unknown to members of the parish, came to the rectory to look once more upon the face of one who was evidently to them a dear friend.

The funeral service was on Monday afternoon, November 8th, the large church being filled to the doors. As Bishop Walker was unable to be present, the service was conducted by Dr. Skeele's nephew, the Rev. Francis Leseure Palmer, rector of Ascension Church, Stillwater, Minnesota. He was assisted by the new rector of the Epiphany, the Rev. Webster Wardell Jennings. The vested choir, in whose work Dr. Skeele had always taken such interest, sang at the opening of the service, the hymn, "For all the Saints who from their labors rest". The psalms were said responsively by the rector and congregation, the lesson being read by the rector of Christ Church, the Rev. David Lincoln Ferris. "One sweetly solemn thought" was then sung by the choir. The Rev. Evan H. Martin, rector of St. Thomas' Church, led in the recitation of the Apostles' Creed. Throughout, the service was simple and impressive, full of restrained feeling, in every respect fitting to the character and personality of the departed. After the

prayers, as the clergy and pall-bearers with the casket left the church, the choir sang "Lead, Kindly Light", and "Abide with me".

In accordance with Dr. Skeele's wishes, the interment was in Chicopee. Mrs. Skeele with her two sisters went on to the service, which was held on Tuesday, at the old Congregational meeting house. There as a boy Amos Skeele had worshipped, as a young man he had been organist, and there he had often preached when visiting his old home. Many friends and relatives were present, several coming from Rhode Island and Connecticut. The Prayer Book service was again read by Dr. Skeele's nephew, wearing his usual vestments. The congregation joined with sympathy in familiar hymns. After the service in the church, while the hearse slowly conveyed the body to the quaint old "burying-ground" a quarter of a mile away, the friends went on foot along the familiar country street. He was laid to rest in the family lot, near his sister and father and mother. His grandfather, the Revolutionary soldier, Dr. Amos Skeele, for whom he was named, is buried only a few rods away.

Of the many expressions of affection and regard that were called forth by Dr. Skeele's death, only a few can be quoted here. The Wardens and Vestry prepared a beautifully engrossed appreciation which reads as follows:

IN MEMORIAM

IN THE death of our beloved Rector, Amos Skeele, we, the vestry of the Church of the Epiphany, do mourn the taking away of him who for upwards of thirty years gave his energies, his entire and unwearied devotion, and the best part of his life to our parish, and being deeply sensible of the loss which the city, the members of his congregation, and ourselves, have sustained, and desirous of paying to his memory our tribute of love and respect, we do now adopt the following

MEMORIAL

Rev. Dr. Amos Skeele, descended from sturdy New England stock, and exceedingly well equipped by training and character for his life work as a minister of the Gospel, commenced his duties as the Rector of our Church in the year 1881, succeeding the Rev. Dr. Nickerson, whose ministry here closed with the year 1880. The life that has now ended completed thus a period of active and continuous service in the ministry of nearly thirty-five years, a record, we believe, not surpassed in the history of the Episcopal Church in Rochester.

During all this period, Dr. Skeele may be said to have lived in and for the Church of the Epiphany. Of a retiring disposition, and of scholarly tastes and habits, he yet lived close to the interests of his people, whose affairs were his, and in whose homes to-day is unfeigned mourning.

Dr. Skeele was a modest and unassuming man, but he had the courage of his convictions, and he did not

swerve from them. Broad and liberal in his Churchmanship, he was the friend of those who sought to know and express the essence of truth. Diffident at times, and with no art of display or manner upon public occasions, he yet rose in his own pulpit to heights of true greatness, to moving eloquence, and it was said of him by a contemporary, a minister of one of our leading Presbyterian churches, himself a prominent thinker and scholar, that he considered Amos Skeele foremost among the preachers of this city, from the viewpoint of the scholar and student.

But most of all, we valued in him the quality of his loyal friendship, the uncompromising directness of his character; to these things the loyalty of his people responded, and he must know to-day that the work he so broadly and solidly founded here will forever endure.

EDNOR A. MARSH,
W. HERBERT WALL, } *Wardens.*

GEORGE H. PERKINS,
ERNEST H. MILLER,
JAMES B. NELLIS,
FREDERICK W. OLIVER,
S. M. CROSLAND, } *Vestrymen.*
GEORGE H. YEARES,
GEORGE G. KINGSTON,
CHARLES BAKER,
J. FRED EVANS,

Dr. Skeele's niece gave this intimate portrait:

I have never known anyone who carried with him an atmosphere of such compelling interest in vital things

as he did. His coming into the house cleared the air of lower themes; the insignificant sank to its own level, and before many minutes had passed we were all intent on some big problem. He would bring the latest book of philosophy or theology, or sometimes a great novel, for reading aloud and discussion. How keen and quaint, how witty and wise and kindly he was, and how one's own thought grew clearer as one talked with him and listened to him!

The following tribute was written by a parishioner whose loyalty and friendship had cheered the rector of the Epiphany for many years:

Amos Skeele—as individual and unusual as the name, was the man who bore it.

Nothing short of real Christianity,—the living in Christ's kingdom of self-sacrificing love,—could content him. His preaching of this Gospel, Sunday after Sunday, was an inspiration that will be life-long to those who heard him—so strong, so fine was his presentation of it. Certain sermons of his were an epoch in one's experience, like the first knowledge of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

And what he preached, he lived! Sincere—he was the very thing itself; utterly modest, with all his knowledge, and power of deep analysis; and strong to endure all that his ministry laid upon him.

His friendship was a privilege; to be of his flock, a blessing; to work with him, one of life's favors.

Thank God for Amos Skeele!

SERMONS

I.

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

"Ye are the salt of the earth."—St. Matthew 5: 13.

These words of Christ remind us that human society is not kept in order by means of the ordinary goodness of such as are commonly called "good people". The standard of what we call "Christian civilization" is kept from falling by the presence of a few. It is necessary that some salt be added to keep it from decay. It is not the average office-holder, it is not the average voter, who always "goes with his party", to whom these words apply. It is not the average Church communicant, but it is the few whom our Lord addresses in the words, "Ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are they to whom it is due that civilized society exists."

There are a great many who deem themselves to be in favor of that which makes for the order and purity of the community. Almost everyone in a general way is in favor of "goodness". Everyone who has any property, for the peaceable enjoyment of which it becomes

desirable for him that robbery should be discouraged, is in favor of having the law against stealing put in execution. Everyone who has a home, whose inmates are dear to him, and whose happiness he values, is interested in the maintenance of some degree of peace and order.

The community is almost unanimously in favor of "good government", and "good laws", and of having the laws executed,—at least so far as they bear on his interests. Even those who are somewhat dishonest would not wish to have everyone dishonest. Those who are not themselves quite trustworthy would still desire that others deal faithfully towards them. And yet, with all this general approval of righteousness, civilization could not have come into existence, and could not be preserved, were it not for that small element whom our Lord calls "the salt of the earth". Who are they to whom He gives this distinction? To whom is He speaking?

This text is taken from Christ's Sermon on the Mount. It was spoken, apparently, in the presence of a large multitude, but the sermon contains some passages, of which this is one, that were hardly descriptive of the multitude.

"Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. . . . " Then follow the words: "Ye are

the salt of the earth." It is they who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake to whom Jesus seems to have said: "Ye are the salt of the earth."

Times have changed since these words were spoken. When Christ sent out His Apostles, the great political powers of the earth were pagan. The ruling influence in His own nation was in hostility to Him and His teaching. It is only a little over three hundred and fifty years since Bishops Ridley and Latimer, and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, the chief compiler of our Prayer Book, were burned at the stake in Oxford, England, by a decree from the Bishop of Rome. But that is all changed, now. One may profess Christianity now in almost any way he pleases, and with all possible devotion, and nobody would attempt to burn him with faggots. And yet these words of Jesus are true for all time.

For our day, as well as for His, may it be truly said: "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Ye are the salt of the earth." It has never been possible that genuine Christian principles could be professed and applied by anyone, anywhere in the world, but at the cost of sacrifice. It is always unpleasant to incur the disfavor of a large part of the community where one lives, even though this disfavor be not expressed in overt acts or accusing words. If it be only cold looks and restrained greetings, by which one is made aware that he has lost the friendship he has been wont to enjoy, still this is trying. But in that land and day

when Jesus taught, individual rights were less respected. Reproaches, revilings, and bitter scorn were freely expressed by word and deed. Yet, "Blessed are they," said Jesus, "whose attachment to the principles of truth and right overrules their fear of reproach."

There is indeed no blessedness in being hooted at by a mob, as happened to Jesus and His disciples. There is no blessedness in being persecuted in any way. The blessedness is altogether in being rooted and grounded in love of right. The blessedness is in having principles of our own, principles to which we are so steadfast that persecution cannot move us. It is adherence to truth and right that is blessed, and that opens the kingdom of heaven to the spirit.

If we turn again to our Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount, we see that He has just before spoken the Beatitudes. The possession of such qualities as are there enumerated constitutes righteousness. "Do not imagine," He would seem to say, "that you possess these qualities, merely because they meet your approval. Do not conclude that you are established in heavenly principles, because you approve of them for your neighbors, or because you would like to have the other members of your family exhibit a good deal of meekness, and peacefulness, and long-suffering, or because you would like to find these qualities in your children, or in those who work for you, or in those for whom you work, or with whom you trade." Just what you would suffer, in order that you might live out this righteousness, is

the measure of how deeply it is rooted in your spirit.

In every age of the world, it costs something to have the kingdom of heaven in human hearts. The Gospel of Christ is not a scheme to get something for nothing. If cost does not come in the form of persecution, yet in some form principles of righteousness have to be tested. Though it is not common in this century to persecute Christians with faggot and flame, none the less the same old persecuting spirit is alive and active. Principles must be maintained at the expense of our ease, our self-love, our self-indulgence, and our desire for the approval of our neighbors. It is just as true to-day, as in the day Jesus uttered these words,—they are the salt of the earth, and they only, who have these principles of righteousness so grounded in their spirits that very often they must go against the current of prevailing sentiment around them, and against the current of selfish inclinations within them.

In the life of Christ we behold a standard of goodness that our spirits approve. His precepts, which bid us not merely to avoid anger, but positively to love our neighbors, not merely to refrain from blasphemy, but to be reverent in heart,—in these precepts which tell us not merely what to do, but what to be, we find that standard which alone can satisfy our spirits.

The world demands no more of us, than that we come up to a certain standard of doing. A man may dislike his neighbor, but he must use no violence towards him. He may wish to enrich himself at the expense of his

neighbor, or at the expense of the community in general, but he must not steal. He may make those whom he dislikes very uncomfortable; he may be secretly glad to see them humiliated, may exult in their misfortune, all without violating any of the laws of business or of society or of the state. There is none of the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven in following such a standard. It is only in conforming to that other standard which satisfies our spirits,—the standard not of doing, but of being,—that we can find blessedness.

But still, great numbers in the best of communities shape their lives with more reference to the outward law, than to the inward law of their spirits. In the business world there has never been any great tendency to an ideal standard of honor and love of one's neighbor. On the contrary, the disposition has generally appeared to press the outward law and custom in the direction of self-interest. In affairs of government, the men who would like to see the Golden Rule applied are not thought to be "practical politicians". And even in what is called "Religion", the greater number are of a sort who seek only to come up to some accepted standard of conduct. To accept prevailing sentiments, to belong to the most respectable party, to measure ourselves by some external code, is always the tendency in the Church, and also in the community and in the state.

In every department of life there is a strong bent towards the lowering of moral standards. The majority of people would not, indeed, wish to see moral standards

abolished. Talk with anyone you chance to meet about politics, temperance, business, the Church, and everyone is "in favor of maintaining a very high standard", or at least in favor of having other people maintain a high standard. But when it comes to the actual daily doings of individuals, the majority are not found strenuously seeking to rise above accepted standards. The majority of working men and women have some disposition to be "eye servants". Many contractors have some disposition to slackness, when no eye but that of the Omniscient can inspect their work. Employers complain that "it is very difficult to get good helpers now-a-days." But those who complain of the difficulty of getting good service from others are occasionally found themselves to sacrifice reality to appearance. The majority of so-called "honest people" are too ready to content themselves with coming up to prevailing usage, or almost up to it. And so there is a constant influence at work that makes for lowering moral standards.

If there were not in society any force present, save that which the "average good man or woman" exerts in approaching some standard of outward righteousness of conduct, even that standard would become lowered little by little, and society would relapse towards barbarism.

But there has been, ever since man was upon earth, another force at work than that which prompts men to conform to outward custom. It is the power of the Spirit of God in the hearts of all mankind, prompting them to seek an excellence that is not conformity to

custom, but the reality of honor and right within us. Even before Christ came in human guise, the spirit of the eternal Christ moved within the hearts of the children of men. All mankind feel to some degree the promptings of this Holy Spirit that makes known to us that the reality of goodness is better than the mere appearance of it. The majority know that there is a better righteousness than yielding to the drift in which circumstances have cast their lives. But "wide is the gate, and broad is the way" towards which selfishness draws men.

Nevertheless, there have been a few in every age led by the Spirit of God within. These are they who seek for nothing short of the reality of truth and righteousness. Such a man was Abraham. In the general course of his life, he would not accept the standards of belief, or the code of society, where circumstances placed him. He must go against the current; he must try to exalt the moral tone of his day. Such a man was the prophet Elijah, who must protest against Baal worship, though it seemed to place him all alone. Such was the prophet Micah, who felt that the Lord had a controversy with His people, and he must espouse it. Such were all the prophets. Such was Christ, who said,—"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Of such were Wicklif, and Huss, and Martin Luther; it was because such men would not accept popular standards, but looked deeper, and sought right as a thing

of the spirit, that they have always been in the minority. Usually such men have been unpopular. Probably the Bible, specially the prophetic part, contains the writings of a greater number of very unpopular men than any other book. "Practical politicians" so-called have never liked this sort of men. Society has not usually smiled upon them, and, alas, even the priests of the Church have often been the bitterest foes of the prophets.

But these unpopular spirits have constituted just that element that has kept human society from corruption. It has been owing to the self-sacrifice of the few that civilization has existed and sometimes advanced to higher ground. It has been these who have followed an ideal of excellence above and beyond the standard of their times, who have been the saviours of human society. "They are the salt of the earth."

Left to the working out of average selfishness, our standards of civilization would gradually sink. Each generation would find itself not higher, but a little lower than the one before it. We can conform to the prevailing tone of Church life or of society about us without any great expense to our selfishness. But simply to conform to the outward code of Church and society is to be a dead weight so far as any improvement is concerned. He who simply conforms to the prevailing order of things adds not one jot to that positive preserving force that Christ calls "the salt of the earth". The salt of the earth are they who love truth and right for their own sake, who are not satisfied with simply doing the right

thing, but would also do it rightly. Therefore they are ever impelled by an inward ideal to raise the standards of life, which average selfishness always tends to depress.

It will surely subject us to some inconvenience to set before us Christ's standard of being. One who sets out with great earnestness to elevate the moral life of the community may even in our day realize the blessedness of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

But if not that, he will surely not fail to discover that the pursuit of real moral excellence is attended with great expense to self-pleasing.

Let us in conclusion briefly notice three suggestions.

1. The measure of the worth of any character is in the force it exerts to rise above the moral level of its generation. Abraham and others of the patriarchs in many details of conduct doubtless fell below the average mark of our time, but inasmuch as the whole force of their lives was given to lifting higher the standard of their generation, they are moral heroes.

2. A second suggestion is that we ought not be satisfied if we only come up to the level of our time in moral and religious life, or pretty near to it. Let us not be of that majority who are held up only by the force of sentiment about them, into some semblance of rightness, but yet have not a particle of that self-denying devotion to truth and righteousness that prompts to strenuous efforts to improve the standards of society or deepen apprehension of the objects of our faith.

3. Finally, we perceive that it is not always those who are most prominent, who stand high in office in Church or State, or who seem to be most influential in the world, who really exert the most saving or the most lasting power upon it. It often happens in business, politics, and religion, that what is called "great success" is only to be won by those who consent to part with their highest ideals of life. Do such gain real success?

Christ says: "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake," or what comes to the same thing for us, "Blessed are they who are willing to make great sacrifices that they may live up to a high ideal of truthfulness and moral worth." Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They are the salt of the earth.

(March 15, 1896.)

This sermon is chosen to give its name to the volume because it was evidently a favorite with Dr. Skeele. His record shows that he preached it no less than sixteen times during the years from 1890 to 1914;—seven times at the Epiphany, and six times at other churches in Rochester. It was rewritten several times, the last complete revision being in 1896.

II.

A GOOD FRIDAY SERMON

"And he said unto Jesus: Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."—St. Luke 23: 42.

Of the various characters who were gathered at the cross of Jesus, all but one did as they might have been expected to do. The account of His arrest on the night before says: "Then all his disciples forsook him and fled." They did as He who knew them best expected them to do. The places on His right hand and on His left were no longer coveted by the two sons of Zebedee. Now they were the allotment of two crucified thieves.

The Roman soldiers did as Roman soldiers might be expected to do. They did as they were commanded, when they nailed Him to the cross; and then they cast lots for His raiment, as Roman soldiers were accustomed to do. The casual passers-by mockingly cried: "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Priests and scribes and elders mocking said: "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

Their judgment of what constitutes power and greatness was such as might be expected of them. The inscription in letters of Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, derisively named Him a king. And even one of the malefactors, that was hanged, railed on Him. So little manifestation of what the world deems great or kingly was there, that even a crucified robber taunted Him. This poor, wretched man thought,—Here is one whom even I can look down upon.

Some friends stood by and wept, but none appeared to see in the crucifixion of Jesus anything but a lost cause, the defeat of all His plans to establish a kingdom.

But there was one who in that hour, with all sincerity, hailed Him as King. This crucified thief was above all others in moral perception. The others could perceive only weakness and defeat. This man beheld a Conqueror coming to His kingdom, and he cried: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!"

The denial of Peter had brought to light a latent weakness in his character, that he himself had not known, till the test came. There must have been in the robber some latent goodness, which the terrible experience of that hour revealed. All we know is that, when the supreme test came, an essential goodness of character was disclosed. At the cross of Jesus, the first was last, and the last was first.

There is only one standard of goodness. The life of Jesus expresses it. His death upon the cross is its supreme expression. The standard of human love is self-

sacrificing love, like that which led Jesus to the cross. He, of whom we should have least expected it, saw this to be the true glory of character, and chose to share it.

What we are, depends upon our standard of glory and worth. Once, when the disciples of Jesus had disputed about who should be greatest, that is, who should have most glory, in His kingdom, He set a little child in the midst of them, and said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In order to enter Christ's heavenly kingdom, to be with Him in His kingdom, these disciples needed to be converted. To be "converted" means literally to be *turned* or *reversed.* They needed to have their ideas and aspirations for glory reversed. We cannot possibly be with Christ in His glorious kingdom, until our desire for glory is in harmony with His. The disciples who disputed about what rank they should hold in the Messiah's kingdom were cherishing the old pagan conception of glory. They thought the glory of Christ's kingdom was to be something like the glory of the Roman empire. They thought their Master was about to ascend some high throne and they hoped to have rank, and high-sounding titles, and power to subdue their enemies. They greatly desired to be with Him in such a kingdom as that. Even the very night before He was crucified, when they sat with Him at that last Passover Supper, they were still disputing about rank in a kingdom of selfish glory.

Christ came for the express purpose of reversing the world's conception of glory. Jesus did not "lay aside His glory", or "veil in flesh His Godhead", as the hymn has it, when He appeared on earth. On the contrary, He revealed God's true glory. That was precisely the purpose of His life on earth. And so we read: "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." Jesus Himself, in that last prayer before His crucifixion, declares: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And St. Paul says: "We have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Christ came to earth not for the purpose of veiling or concealing the glory of God, but just the contrary; He came to make the true glory of God and of the heavenly kingdom known. Never had the glory of the heavenly kingdom shone with such splendor on earth, as on that day when the dying thief beheld it, chose it, and began to share it with his Lord. That world of imperial Rome, founded on war and bloodshed, was the background on which was manifested the true glory of God, by the cross and sacrifice of Jesus.

It was not any outward sign of power or greatness that inspired the confidence of the penitent thief: it was the moral superiority of Christ. The disciples had been cherishing quite other thoughts of what constitute greatness, and of what the glory of his kingdom should be. Let us not make their mistake. The highest possible manifestation of worth is here presented,—Jesus

Christ offering His life upon the cross from unselfish love of man. The whole history of the world presents no other manifestation of worth so great.

Some thought of what constitutes supreme worth is cherished by every soul of man. So far as mortals have bowed down before that unselfish goodness of the Saviour, they have been in character exalted. So far as they truly worship that unselfish goodness, they are saved. So far as mortals adopt that unselfish goodness into their lives, they are to-day with Christ in His kingdom.

The humility, the self-sacrificing love, that led Jesus to choose the cross, rather than to "save Himself", are not qualities which secure the readiest admiration of the world. But Christ manifested in His life, and in His death, divine greatness. The disciples of Jesus had thought of His kingdom as affording conditions where their selfish pride would be gratified. But the great manifestation of power which they beheld was the power expressed in the patience, the humility, and the forgiving spirit of their Master. Just on the eve of His crucifixion, He had said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now is the prince of this world judged." The Son of God dying upon the cross—that was a day of judgment for the world. The selfishness of human hearts was thus brought to light, in its contrast to God's love. We need to share in the spirit of Christ, that we may be with Him in His kingdom.

The highest expression of power is the power that

overcomes the evil of human hearts. It is the only power that can conquer human selfishness,—the power manifested at the cross, the power of self-sacrificing love. Jesus said: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." To draw the world to Himself, Christ must be lifted up in the character and life of His people.

When the world beholds that moral beauty which the cross of Christ expresses, lifted up in the daily life of Church communicants; when children meet it in the prevailing spirit of home and school; when it shall be reflected in the ambitions and aims of life and methods of business; when self-sacrificing love, like that which won the heart of the thief, shall be the atmosphere of our Churches—then we shall discover that the Gospel has lost none of its original power. Then we shall better understand the meaning of those words of the great Apostle: "Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God."

(Good Friday, April 16, 1911.)

III.

THE MEANING OF HOME

"We are of good courage . . . and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."—II Corinthians 5: 8.

The older version of the New Testament says, "absent from the body; present with the Lord"; the revised version renders it, "absent from the body; at home with the Lord." The word which is translated in the one case *present,* and in the other *at home,* is defined in the Greek lexicon as meaning "to be among one's own people, or to be at home."

St. Paul was writing to the Corinthians about the Resurrection. He said: "We know that he which raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with him." And he goes on to say: "We know that if this frail structure, the human body, were dissolved in dust, we have a mansion, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The Apostle who wrote this was a man who had no permanent home. The business of his life was that of

a traveling missionary. After he took up this occupation, he visited the chief centers of population throughout Asia Minor and Southern Europe, and never had a permanent abiding place. He never complains of the hardships he endures, but often speaks of the joy of his calling. He does in one passage refer to the matter somewhat sadly, when he says: "To this hour we both hunger and thirst and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place." And one of the attractions that this homeless Apostle contemplates in the Resurrection life, is that he will have a home.

The text suggests that our home instincts have in them something that belongs not merely to present life, and the temporary bodily organization we now inhabit, but also to "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens". Love of home has been an effective force in uplifting and civilizing the human race. A people that lived a wandering, homeless life, could never attain to a high grade of character.

The divine purpose in planting a home instinct in human hearts is to train us for a service that looks beyond the walls of our dwellings. You send a child to school to train him for activities that are outside and beyond the walls of the schoolroom. So it is in God's school of life. There are those whose devotion is narrowed down to a small circle of interests and sympathies, and who remain indifferent to the larger family of God.

God did not give us homes in order to narrow our sympathies, but rather to enlarge our hearts. The

duties and sacrifices that home affections put upon us ought to make us public-spirited. Homes fulfill their divine purpose, when they educate us to be useful citizens and loyal members of Christ's household, the Church.

We know that a building is not in itself a home. There are many houses, furnished and adorned, that are not homes. That which constitutes a home is not the material wood or bricks or stone from which our dwellings are built. It is not the size, form, color, or arrangement, that makes any place a home. St. Paul had just been saying: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Sometimes we deem ourselves to be looking at things seen, when in reality we are looking at things not seen. By a law of mental association, we connect with some one place, more than with any other, that which our spirits crave as a home. Yet it is not the place, nor the material, but something not made with hands that makes a home.

What we chiefly need in a home is a habitation for our spirits.

1. That place is home that furnishes us with *protection.* We need to be protected in many ways. We want to be protected from the harsh criticism and unloving judgments of the unsympathizing world. At home we do not meet the severe, critical, fault-finding spirit that is in the world without. The roof that

covers our home shelters us from a great deal more than the rain and the snow. That which makes it home is that our spirits are sheltered from unfriendly elements that may elsewhere assail us. Its walls protect us from coldness other than that of the weather, and we cannot but think its roof and walls to have qualities that belong to no other roof or walls. The house that is our home even now is in great part "a house not made with hands". It is "a habitation of the spirit".

2. Moreover, home is the place where we find *companionship.* The light that brightens it is the light of friendliness and love. It is not so much the utility or the elegance of its furnishings that enhances their worth. These may be very deficient in those qualities that would minister to our taste, and yet by pleasant associations they may minister most effectually to our hearts; and the material objects themselves come to seem like old friends.

3. And home is the place where we find *rest.* There is no other spot where we can so completely lay aside the burdens of life, and enjoy repose. The rest which weary and heavy-laden mortals most need is not generally that which is won by escape from toil. We often need to escape from our selfishness. The most grievous burden that mortals bear is the burden of self-seeking. It is not the work and duty of Christ's calling that is most wearing, but the burden of unworthy ambitions, the rivalries, the envies, the penuriousness, the selfish anxieties, that make hearts weary and heavy-

laden. That, therefore, which leads us to connect the thought of home with grateful repose is not what the material structure furnishes.

Our earthly homes, indeed, are not ideal or perfect; yet envy, rivalry, vanity, covetousness, have less power there than in the world outside. Parents are not apt to be envious of their children, or children of parents. If there are any whose success does not awaken a spirit of jealousy, they are those at home. If there are any whose possessions we do not covet, they are those at home. If there is any place where selfish ambition is laid aside, and where "the one who is greatest is the one who serveth," it is at home. Home is a resting place for our spirits, a house not made with hands.

4. Home is the place where a table is spread that feeds and nourishes our spirits. It is not merely the food we eat that constitutes the nourishment we there receive. "Man doth not live by bread alone." And they are poor and starved souls who crave only bread and meat to satisfy their hunger.

In a true home all the daily meals are sacraments. The daily meeting at the common board is a means of grace. It is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us." There is danger that we separate too widely our religious doings from those we call "secular", the things of daily life. To recognize the sacramental element in our daily bread does not make the Table of the Lord, which is in the church, any less but much more sacred. We do not

exalt the Lord's Supper by regarding our other eating and drinking as common and unhallowed. He who gives us our daily bread seeks to give Himself in that gift. To receive the Communion feast aright must help us to recognize the divine presence at home, and should lead us to take our daily bread in Christian communion, strengthening our spirits for duty. It is not required that many religious words be spoken at table, but they ought always to be consecrated to that which is cheerful, kindly, and refined.

5. If we seek then for that which constitutes a home, for that which is at the root of all the protection, and companionship, the repose and nourishment, which home ministers to our spirits, we find it to be *sacrifice*. The root of all its blessedness is self-forgetting love. Home, like the Kingdom of Heaven, is built on sacrifice. We gladly sacrifice for those whom we love. Sacrifice is the measure of love. It is unselfish love that makes home free from rivalries, envies, harsh judgment, and makes it a haven of protection and repose. Sacrifice builds its walls; sustains its roof; spreads its table. There can be no home without sacrifice as its foundation. Sacrifice in the name and spirit of Christ constitutes the reality of home.

Though we ourselves be selfish, we love to be with those who are not selfish. The atmosphere of unselfishness is the genial air our spirits love to breathe. The love of home is an unconscious recognition that we were made for that Kingdom of Heaven which is grounded

in unselfishness, and whose blessedness is in taking Christ's yoke of self-sacrificing love. The home instinct is not a mere accident of our earthly life. The dissolving of our earthly tabernacle does not dissolve our love of home. That is an inseparable element of our spirit. That which ministers protection, and companionship, and repose to our spirits is imperishable.

The protection of home is more than the shelter of its roof and walls; its companionship is not mere proximity to other human beings; its rest is not that of a mere lodging-place; the grace of spiritual strength it ministers is more than material bread can give. The reality of home is in the things which are not seen, but which are designed to connect our lives with the things which are spiritual and eternal.

So far as the unselfishness of Christ rules within our spirits, there is already the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven. We may already be partaking of that which God hath prepared for those who love Him. The blessedness of the eternal home may have its beginnings now. That is not dependent on place or surroundings, but its condition is that we be "with the Lord".

We are with the Lord and the Lord is with us, not by means of any change of place, but by sharing Christ's spirit of unselfish devotion to the welfare of others. To be at home with the Lord must always mean to be in harmony of mind and heart with Him. To be at home with God is to have that consciousness of God's Fatherhood that possessed the spirit of Christ. It is to take

our place with Him in the family of God. Then we know the universe to be our Father's house.

Our real home is the Kingdom of Heaven; and the Kingdom of Heaven is wherever we are with Christ in glad sacrifice for the welfare of the children of God. Home is in the realm of self-sacrificing service for His sake. Christlike unselfishness opens the door of the real home, "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens". The self-forgetting spirit of love is the Resurrection and the Life of Christ within us. That protection and companionship and rest which make the reality of home, do not depend on place or condition. That reality does not depend on earthly tabernacles, but remains when they are dissolved. And, therefore, says the Apostle: "We are of good courage and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."

(April 10, 1904. First Sunday after Easter.)

IV.

WHAT IS SALVATION?

"What must I do to be saved?"—Acts 16: 30.

The Apostles Paul and Silas had been arrested and brought before the magistrates of the city of Philippi, accused of being disturbers of the peace. They were tried and condemned to be cruelly beaten and then shut up in a deep and loathsome dungeon of the city prison. The record says: "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them." But presently, the region was visited by an earthquake which shook the prison walls, so that many of the doors were thrown from their fastenings.

The jailor thought his prisoners would all escape. In that event, under the stern government of Rome from which he held his office, he would probably be treated as unfaithful to his trust. The account says that he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But he was restrained by Paul and Silas, who assured him that his prisoners were all there; none had escaped.

It must have been altogether a new experience for this jailor to find two of his prisoners solicitous about his welfare. He had probably never before seen prisoners, who, in the darkest dungeon of the prison, and at midnight, could sing praises. They had saved his life, instead of concerning themselves about their own safety. Amid the confusion of that hour, they were strong and self-possessed, while he was shaken and trembling. It was but natural that he should turn for support to the strong, brave spirits whose calmness and sympathy had held him back from self-destruction. It is recorded that he fell down before them, and said: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

The meaning of the jailor's question is to be interpreted by the probable character of the man, and from the circumstances of the hour. It is not likely that it was concern about the "salvation of his soul", as the term is often used by evangelistic preachers, that prompted the question of the Philippian jailor. It is not at all probable that the man had any knowledge of Christian teaching. If we suppose him to have held the current beliefs of the people of Philippi, then he would believe that there were many deities of various kinds and characters. He probably knew that these men had been beaten and imprisoned on account of some religious question. He would conclude that some deity was angry with the city, and with himself in particular, for the ill-treatment of these men. The conduct of the jailor corresponds to this view of the matter. The first

thing he does is to get these men out of their dungeon, and do all he can for their comfort, and eagerly inquire how he could enjoy security like theirs. It would seem that he recognized a certain superiority in these two prisoners. Subjected to cruel scourging and hard treatment, yet their cheerfulness had not left them. Everything that could make life desirable had been taken from them, and still they had resources that supported their spirits. They had something that he lacked.

The experience of that hour had shown him the insecurity of his best treasures. He felt the need of some treasure that earthquakes do not shake. Probably he did not have any vivid sense of spiritual needs. The loss that he was chiefly concerned about just then may have been the loss of his post as warden of the Philippian prison. It is not likely that the "loss of his soul" entered into his mind, when he asked: "What shall I do to be saved?"

Nevertheless, the fact of the case was, the man had come to the end of his resources. He had been put in that hour into a condition in which life did not seem worth living. Take away his credit, the respect of his fellow-men, his means of support, put him in the place of one of his prisoners, and what was there to live for?

It is often the case that people are very willing to die as soon as temporal supports fail them. They may experience loss of health, loss of property, disappointed hopes, and they want to die. This willingness to die is not always the result of faith in God, but more likely

the lack of it. The cause of it is the want of resources of spirit that are out of reach of accidents. The Apostles were not afraid to face death; they had often faced it. Also, they were not afraid to live, and they saw there was something to live for. They could be cheerful and hopeful in conditions where many despair and only want to die.

It is evident what this man needed to be saved from. There may have been no especial viciousness of life, but there was a shallowness that he needed to be saved from. It is just what multitudes need to be saved from. It is what Christianity saves us from in so far as we have confidence in its principles and make actual application of them to our lives. It is to be saved from the insecurity of a life that depends for its supports, its hopes, its cheerfulness, entirely on temporal conditions and happenings.

The man who asked what he must do to be saved was one whose life was not directed by any high moral purpose,—the fulfillment of a divine calling. His purpose was not to accomplish a service wherein the spirit finds a delight, a support, a peace, independent of earthly happenings. Christ warns us against the shallowness of a life chiefly absorbed in such considerations as, What shall we eat, and What shall we drink, and What shall we wear? Jesus observed and sympathized with the common desire to get as much as possible of the good of life, and He deplored the mistake so many make of seeking it in low aims of living. The Gospel

has a good deal to say about salvation, about saving, and being saved. Manhood and womanhood are not saved by simply getting into agreeable conditions. Salvation is spiritual health. It is to bring into exercise the highest faculties of mind and spirit. The man who neglects his religious nature is dwarfed in the highest faculties of his being.

This account of the earthquake at Philippi reminds us of the story of Mr. Emerson and the Second Adventist. As Emerson was one day walking in the college grounds at Cambridge, he was accosted by a man in a highly excited state of mind, who exclaimed: "Mr. Emerson! Mr. Emerson! The world is coming to an end to-morrow!" To whom Mr. Emerson with great calmness replied: "Well, I believe I can get along without it."

The Apostle Paul, too, was one of those who, if the world was presently coming to an end, "could get along without it". He said: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." But for the jailor,—when his world appeared to be falling into fragments, he had no resources. He had nothing left.

Jesus lived a life that was independent of earthly accidents. Because His aims of life were so high, His chief treasures were secure. In what seemed the darkest hour of His life He could say to his followers: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:" "Your joy no man taketh from you."

To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ implies that we

have confidence in those principles and those motives of action that marked His life, and implies that we adopt them for our own. The only way that the jailor could be saved in such an event as the earthquake, which threatened to destroy his world, was by acquiring some resources that earthquakes could not destroy. So long as we live in the world, we must in some degree be affected by material conditions. But we ought not to be slaves of material conditions. We ought not to be in bondage to temporal happenings. Our peace of mind and joy of life ought not to depend entirely on conditions and possessions that may on any day be shaken, dissolved, and pass away.

Jesus bids us to live in the present, that is, be occupied with the duties and conditions of the present—but not to live for the present day. Live for eternal interests. Live in the light of the eternal world. He says: "Make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

But what was the Lord Jesus Christ, that we should find salvation by believing in Him? His life was a life of poverty—the most of people are seeking a salvation that consists in being saved out of poverty. Can we think of getting salvation from the ills of life, and be at the same time as poor as He? His was a life absorbed in service for His fellow men. The most of people admire His spirit, but would prefer to be inde-

pendent of their neighbors. It was His food to do the will of His Father in heaven; this was His chief concern. The most of people are more concerned about their immediate comfort and pleasure, than they are about God's will for them.

To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,—what is it? It can be nothing else than to believe in such purposes, such ambitions, such aims of living as those which inspired His life. Can we believe in them, with such reality of conviction as shall make us indeed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ?

But Jesus was right, after all. His must be the true philosophy of life for beings like ourselves. We who thirst for life and peace and joy; we who need good that is imperishable; peace that earthquakes cannot shake,—where shall we find it? Jesus was right.

Perhaps the selfish world has put too much emphasis on the sufferings of Jesus. It would be well for us to think sometimes about what Jesus did not suffer. Jesus never suffered from wounded pride. He never suffered anything from envy. He never suffered from ungratified ambition. He never suffered from fear—fear of man, or of what the future might bring forth. He never suffered from doubt of the goodness of His Heavenly Father. And so we might lengthen the list of things that destroy the peace and joy of the world,—things from which Jesus never suffered.

Yes! Jesus was right. His kind of life was indeed the right kind of life for us all. We surely need to

have a practical belief in our Lord Jesus Christ. We need the belief that means sharing His sympathies, His purposes of life, His elevation of spirit. How greatly we need resources of spirit that are out of the reach of temporal accidents.

The greater part of the sufferings of Jesus was what He suffered through His concern for the moral welfare of His fellow men. Surely what we suffer through our concern for the moral welfare of our fellow men, as compared with what comes from other sources of pain, is a very tolerable kind of suffering. When the earthquake shook Philippi, there was manifested by the Apostles that strength and elevation of spirit that comes from being established in those principles of living that were expressed in the life of Jesus. The Apostles through the commotion were strong and cheerful. If the world was coming to an end that night, they were confident they could get along without it. The man whose dearest treasures were such that they might be shaken by an earthquake, or lost by disappointment, or sickness, or death, was one who needed to be saved.

There are many such. We need to be saved out of the insecurity of a life whose chief treasures depend on transitory happenings. We need to believe on our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to believe in finding our greatest good in pursuing aims of life like those He sought. We need a belief that finds the chief joy of life in service done for Christ's sake.

(October 29, 1911.)

V.

JOY IN GOD'S SERVICE

"My delight is in thy commandments."—Psalm 119: 40.

There are many who entertain a different sentiment regarding the commandments of God from that expressed by the writer of the 119th Psalm. Instead of being a delight, they seem to be a burden. Do not the commandments restrict our freedom? Do not God's laws often stand in the way of our happiness? The Apostle says that "sin is the transgression of law". If there were no law, there could be no sin. Then conscience could not condemn us, for conscience is our sense of obligation to law. But the world is wicked and wretched, because God's laws are transgressed.

Would it then have been better for us if these laws had not been laid upon us? The Psalmist does not think so. He says: "My delight is in thy commandments." "Thy law is dearer unto me than thousands

of gold and silver." "O how love I thy law!" He recognizes the fact that the obligations laid upon us may become the source of our highest happiness. The greatest privilege that we enjoy is involved in the fact that we have duties. Our obligations to God are our greatest privileges.

All things in the material world are subject to what we call the laws of nature. These laws are obeyed with a regularity and constancy more wonderful than any miracle. If the sun should occasionally rise in the west and set in the east, it might be deemed a miracle and evidence of the work of a supernatural power, but that would not be so wonderful as the fact that for countless ages the earth and the sun have moved in their orbits with perfect regularity. For countless ages, the earth has moved in her journey around the sun, passing each point in her course not one second too early, nor one second too late.

But these laws of nature are sometimes very inconvenient; fire burns; cold freezes; poison kills. Would it not then add to our convenience, could we abolish these laws of nature? So far from that, we could not live in the world were it not that the laws of nature are fixed and changeless. In fact, a world could not exist without law. Order means law. Were it not that the seasons come and go in unchanging order, the possibility of existence for us on this earth would be gone. Were it not that the effects of heat and cold, of chemical combinations and material forces, were subject to un-

varying law, they would not serve us, but they would destroy us. The only way in which the forces of nature can be of use, is by knowing their laws, and putting ourselves in line with them.

The deepest fact of our spiritual being is the fact that we have a sense of obligation. In the spirit of everyone is some sense of obligation to conform to certain laws or principles of truth, duty, and right. This inward sense of obligation is God's law written on the human spirit. The Ten Commandments, the Decalogue, is an attempt to express in an outward way this inner law of God written on the human heart. It may be that we sometimes find these laws of God to be inconvenient. Our selfish inclinations are opposed to these laws. Lies seem sometimes more convenient than truth. Duties may be laid upon us which we feel to be burdensome; tasks are assigned us for which we have no relish. Our wishes may be thwarted by the laws. Would it then add to the happiness of life, if we could become free from obligation to moral law? Should we be happier, if we could follow our inclinations without any sense of obligations violated? We can, if we will, stifle the reproach of conscience. We can harden our hearts, but we can never get the positive approval of our own moral sense, except by implicit obedience to the Law of God.

To take away the sense of obligation would be to take away the perception of a right and a wrong. And what would be the condition of society if mankind were

destitute of moral sensibilities? There could be no such thing as human society. Families, communities, political combinations, could not exist were it not for a sense of moral obligations. The rudest tribe of savages could not maintain their tribal order, were there not at least some dim sense of a law, higher than human law, inscribed upon their hearts.

The laws which govern human societies derive their authority, their force, from a higher law. Take away the higher law, and there is no foundation for such qualities as honor, loyalty, friendship. These are conceptions that spring out of our sense of obligation to a higher law than that of the state. To blot out the sun from the heavens would not more completely rob the earth of beauty, than taking away that sense of moral obligation would rob human society of every quality that we could admire or respect.

The laws that govern human associations derive their binding force from the fact of obligation to God. It is true we may be disposed to feel that duties are a burden. We are inclined to seek freedom from responsibility. But the fact that duties are laid upon us, gives life all its value and significance. For what does it mean that we have duties? That we have obligations to God? It means for one thing that we are beings capable of freely choosing and doing the will of the Eternal God. How this exalts humanity in the scale of being! The angels of heaven can engage in no higher activity than to do the will of God. There can

be nothing higher. The fact of our obligation to God gives to our whole life a higher meaning.

The thought of obligation to God brings us into direct relation to God. It opens eternity to us. We find ourselves to-day directly related to that which is eternal. Says the Apostle: "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (I. John 2: 17.) In performing our duties to-day, in fulfilling our obligations to God, we put ourselves in line with that Eternal Will of God which stretches from eternity to eternity. In this way we may be living the eternal life to-day.

This sense of obligation to God is, as it were, the throne of God established within the soul. Or we might say, it is the real Mount Sinai of God's law, of which the traditionary Mount Sinai in Arabia is only the figure and shadow. This sense of obligation to God, this Mount Sinai within the soul of man, is utterly unaccommodating, and is often felt to be inconvenient. There is no other mental suffering so great as that which comes from a sense of violated obligation. But such pains may be avoided by obedience, and our obligation to God may become the spring of the highest and fullest joys. To have a self-approving consciousness, to have the testimony that we please God, there is no higher joy that the soul of man can experience.

It is with these obligations to God as it is with physical laws; when they are violated by neglect or excess they become our relentless persecutors, but when

they are respected they become our most faithful friends. We do not on that account judge that it would tend to the increase of our happiness, if we could have the laws of nature set aside. And if it were possible that our obligation to God should be taken away, so far from giving us freedom, it would be the absolute destruction of our freedom. Apart from duty there is no freedom.

And further, we may well consider how much it adds to our comfort, that in our obligation to God we have one thing that remains fixed and unchanged from age to age. Opinions change; sentiments change; standards of conduct and custom change; but here we have one thing, and that the most central in our experience, that does not change. The principle of right and wrong is unalterable. A standard is established in our spirits that does not change. The moral law of God is the one thing wherein we are related to that which is everlasting. We can come to no world where right and wrong in their essential nature are not precisely the same that they are in this world. We can come to no time, by any lapse of ages, in which right and wrong shall be essentially changed.

We may well count this fact as one of the greatest comforts of existence. It is a great boon for us that we are given one thing that is unchangeable. Through our moral sense, our consciousness of right and wrong, it becomes possible for us to share in the eternal life of God. The world passes away; opinions change; one age is strict, another lax; moods, feelings, standards of

conduct and taste in human societies change. How great a blessing it is that in our sense of obligation to the law of God we are bound to that which does not change! How much it signifies for us mortals that at one point, our moral sense, the Eternal touches us!

Would that we might know what a blessing is vouchsafed us in the fact that duties are laid upon us! We ought to rejoice and thank God for constituting us with capacity for freely doing the will of God. Life would, indeed, be very insipid if there were nothing given us to do. Man was made to find his chief happiness in overcoming difficulties. Most of the amusements of mankind consist in overcoming some difficulty. The element of conquest is prominent in the games and sports of men. None on earth are so wretched as those who have nothing to do, and next in the order of wretchedness are those who have nothing difficult to do. We often fail to consider how dull and uninteresting our lives would be, were there positively no obstacles to be encountered, and no sacrifices to be made. And so, in the mere worldly view, it is common to see men turn their backs on self-indulgence and ease, and seek the higher joy that is won only through endurance and struggle. From the merely earthly estimate of life's values, the person does not win respect, who has not the heroism to let go the pursuit of self-gratification, and to take hold of something stronger.

If we know what life means, we shall know that our obligations to God, the demand of the divine law, and of

duty laid upon us, are the highest blessing given to man. It is true that Christ has come to bring us freedom, but not freedom to break the law, but the power freely and gladly to obey the law. True freedom is power freely to use our highest faculties. This eternal law of God binds us to duty and to sacrifice and to God Himself. It is this which makes heaven and eternal life a possibility for us.

(January 19, 1913.)

VI.

WHY GO TO CHURCH?

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—St. Matthew 18: 20.

There are not many precepts or commandments in the New Testament directly and explicitly enforcing the duty of church going. It is different in the Old Testament. There the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy are largely given up to directions with reference to religious worship. Many directions are given concerning the ways of calling assemblies for worship; the particular mode of procedure when the people were assembled; everything that concerned the time, place, manner of conducting worship, under the Old Testament dispensation were matters of statutory law. These Levitical laws also prescribe penalties for their violation. The man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was put to death.

The particular church organizations of Christendom have (as is quite essential) their specific laws relating

to religious observance and worship. Our Episcopal Church has this general law, as follows:

"Canon 20: Title 1. Of the Due Celebration of Sundays.

"All persons within this Church shall celebrate and keep the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, by regular participation in the public worship of the Church, in hearing the Word of God read and taught, in private and public prayer, in other exercises of elevation and in acts of charity, using all godly and sober conversation."

We have also in the Prayer Book rubrics specific directions as to the conduct of public worship. Still we have nothing that corresponds with the Old Testament book of Leviticus. We may wonder why Jesus, who came to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, did not lay down a code of laws about public worship.

The law of worship in the book of Exodus is that if any fail of proper observance of the Passover, "That soul shall be cut off from the congregation."

Very different is Christ's law of public worship. The inducement He offers is not a threat but a promise. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

When the snow banks of winter are touched by the rays of the spring sunshine, they flow together because it is their nature so to do. The rivers flow towards the ocean; the flowers turn their faces towards the light; the needle points toward the magnetic pole, moved by the law of its being. So human hearts made alive by

Christian love flow together. It was no statute law that Jesus imposed upon His Church that was the cause why public worship was instituted in that first age. Hearts renewed by the spirit of Christ need no written law requiring them to assemble in the name of Christ. An irrepressible instinct of the life that is in them brings them together.

So far from its being needful to enact laws that Christian souls should meet together in the name of Christ, no human power has ever yet been able to prevent their doing it. Time and again during the first three centuries of our era, heathen emperors and persecuting governments tried to enforce laws prohibiting Christian assemblies for worship. In spite of the sharpest persecution, Christians met together in Christ's name, and Christianity prevailed over paganism on its own ground.

Jesus did not lay down a positive law commanding the time, place, and manner of assembling for worship, because He knew His followers must assemble in His name, if the life of God was in them. Fellowship, communion, congregating for worship, are as spontaneous where Christian faith exists, as that the verdure and the flowers should appear at the coming of spring.

No law could be so effective as these words: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." It is not in accord with the spirit of Christianity that an unbending rule should be imposed about the place of worship, the materials and

their care, as in the laws of the book of Leviticus or Deuteronomy. Not that the details of worship are of no importance, but it is in the spirit of Christianity to trust more to LOVE than to LAW. Christianity depends more on the innate sense of reverence in worshippers than on fixed, minute rules.

It was a rule in ancient Israel that for the efficacy of synagogue worship there must be as many as ten heads of families whose presence in the assembly would be constant. But the Church does not depend on numbers, but on the principle of unity. It is founded on communion of the faithful in Christ's name and Christ's presence. The same laws of attraction that sustain the mightiest bulks of heavenly bodies,—suns, stars, and systems,—the same laws of gravitation are present and active in the minutest grain of sand, in the tiniest atom that floats in the sunbeam. The same laws of light that prevail in the remotest stars are also in the smallest crystal that sparkles in the sun's rays. And the same principle of unselfish love, that sustains the harmony of the society of heaven, is present and active where there are two or three gathered in the name of Christ.

The Lord's Supper has ever been esteemed by the Church as a gathering together in the name of Christ. This Holy Communion gives an especial expression to the unity of believers. It gives expression to that love and charity in which Christ's presence is realized. A loveless soul is by its own condition cut off from communion in the body of Christ.

To meet together in the name of Christ is to meet in the spirit of Christ. It is to be clothed with the temper and disposition which His life of love and service expressed. There was no feature more prominent in the life of our Lord than His regard for the well being of His fellow men. We do not meet in the name of Christ, if we assemble in a spirit of indifference towards others.

We assume in the service of the Holy Communion to offer and present ourselves unto God. We can make no acceptable offering to God unless we offer with it the "mind of Christ". Shutting ourselves in a shell of vanity and self-regard, communion with the body of Christ becomes impossible for us. A self-seeking spirit may come a thousand times to the Gate of Heaven and go away unblessed.

The Communion of Saints is the manifestation of the presence of Christ. It is not only in the meeting together of Christians for worship that the presence and power of Christ is expressed. Wherever in the world there is combined effort for objects like those which Christ sought, in the manifold works for the uplifting of human life, in all that tends to a better civilization, a better world, Christ's presence is manifested. Still, however many our combinations for social service, we deem this promise to have special reference to the gathering together of the disciples of Christ for worship and fellowship. In no other way could the benefit of public worship be set forth with such attractive power

as in these words of the Master: "There am I in the midst of them."

It is not this or that specific gift that is offered, not this or that particular need that is to be supplied, but it is the promise of that which includes every good. We do not meet together to worship one whose presence is in some distant realm of space, but Him who saith: "I am in the midst of them." Wherever Jesus was present, He was present to supply human needs. Wherever His presence is manifested to-day, human needs are supplied. The assurance of His presence is enough. It means: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled; Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. The promise of all that human spirits need is implied in the words of Christ:

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

(May 31, 1913.)

VII.

REVERENCE

"Hallowed be thy Name."—St. Matthew 6: 9.

The word "name" is here used, as in many passages of Scripture, to designate the reality or the substance or character. To "praise the name of the Lord" is to praise God's being or character. To pray "in the name of Christ" is to pray in that filial spirit which was His. The first thing in the Lord's Prayer is the first thing in all right prayer,—the foundation of religion,—that is, a spirit of reverence.

What then is reverence? Reverence is one kind of appreciation. To appreciate anything is to have a just sense of its worth. Reverence is appreciation of the highest kind of worth. There is only one kind of value that can properly awaken our reverence, and that is moral value.

We appreciate money values; we appreciate learning and literature, and the products of the arts of use and beauty; but we do not reverence them. Reverence does

not begin till we stand in the presence of a higher kind of worth than belongs to these. We do not reverence things, but persons only. Reverence is appreciation of the highest of all values,—the Best. If we reverence God, it must be as a personal Being that we do so. Reverence is rooted in the soul's apprehension of God, as a personality. If there were no God, there could not be anything to reverence.

The reverence due to humanity in general, and to its worthiest types in particular, depends on the common relationship of all human souls to our Father in Heaven. Whether one has any of that reverence,—essential, not only to right worship but to right living,—must depend on his capacity to see and understand. Jesus found many of the sort of whom He said: "Having eyes, they see not, and having ears, they hear not." They were such as had no spiritual capacity for appreciating the best. The very Son of God was there, and they did not know it.

There are many of that sort now. There are those who see many things, and hear many words, but never perceive the meaning of what they see and hear. Many tourists who walk through the art galleries of Europe gaze on acres of painted canvass, and come away without perceiving the significance of anything they gazed upon.

If we do not apprehend God's presence in common experiences and common duties, we miss the true meaning and value of life. For lack of reverence, the world and life grow commonplace and uninteresting.

Men write books, and paint pictures, and make poetry and music to give expression to that sense of beauty and value that fills their spirits and presses for utterance. And if men have in their souls any just appreciation of Him who is the Best of Beings, they will desire to express in acts of devotion their sense of His beauty and worth. This impulse to give expression to our best ideals of truth and beauty and goodness is one trace of the image of God in the spirit of man. In this respect we may say, "Man is in the image of God." The created universe—of which we ourselves are part—is the work of the Great Artist giving expression to His ideals of beauty and worth. The creation is God's expression of Himslf.

Jesus expresses outwardly that humanity to which our hearts and consciences respond, and which we know to be the ideal humanity, the purpose and meaning of the Creation. Says the Rev. Dr. Gordon, "The greatest thing that we know is man. The greatest man that we know is Jesus Christ. When, therefore, we hear Him say, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,' we have a guide to the heart of the Eternal that is of infinite moment." Dr. Gordon adds, "These words are sometimes used to prove the Divinity of Christ. They may also prove the Humanity of God."

In the Lord's Prayer, we are not taught to pray first for our daily bread, nor yet for the forgiveness of our sins. Our first need is a sense of the name, that is, the character, of our Father in Heaven, that we may draw

near to Him, and that He may reveal to our spirits the wealth of His universe.

The degree of our reverence must be according to the grade of our being. A noble spirit must have great reverence; a mean spirit can have but little. The Goths and Vandals who overran Italy and conquered Rome could not see the beauty of marble palaces and stately temples. They had no use for these except to build mean huts for themselves and furnish stables for their horses.

The true wealth and beauty of life have no meaning to the undevout, the irreligious man. In any symmetrical growth of a community in knowledge, or any advance in civilization, there must be a growing perception that moral value is the root of all value. To take moral value out of life is to take away all other values. The advance of civilization must be growth of reverence.

Superstition is not reverence. Superstition is rooted in ignorance; reverence is rooted in appreciation. Here is the measure of the moral development of an individual or of a people. What he appreciates, and how justly he appreciates, is the measure of the man. If we reverence God, we must "honor all men".

It is true that the reality of reverence does not consist in formal worship or the observance of ceremonies. Yet if we are deeply sensible of the beauty and worth of the Best of Beings, we shall not be stinted in our expression of that which fills our spirits. A right use

of the forms of worship in the Church cannot fail to deepen our reverence and make all our life richer and fuller of meaning. For true worship not merely adores, but seeks to possess the qualities of Him whom it worships.

Real reverence implies a profound respect for truth, earnest search to know the truth. It is a false reverence that fears lest the new truth should reveal the hollowness of ancient opinions and prove them falsehoods. Superstition worships images and books and ancient opinions for their own sake. Reverence values truth and studies books for the sake of the truth they may yield. Superstition pays homage to titles and symbols of greatness. Reverence honors the reality of worth.

In so far as one lacks reverence he is shut out from all that is brightest and best in life. Since reverence is the perception and appreciation of the best, therefore without reverence we cannot have the best that life offers. The irreverent soul sinks low in the scale of being. For him the skies do not reveal their brightness, nor the earth unfold her beauty. For him the calls of duty are not so sacred, nor the relations and experiences of life so rich and full of meaning.

But to one who advances into deepening appreciation of the divine beauty, who has eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to understand the sacredness of common duties and the meaning of daily experiences, life can never grow dull or uninteresting. To the reverent spirit, life unfolds new and richer meaning every

day. It is a going forward and not backward. He advances from the darkness toward the dawn. His path becomes as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

VIII.

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

"The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."—I Timothy 3: 15.

By the truth is here meant the truth of the Christian religion. The Church is this religion organized. Religion produces the Church, and the Church exists to foster and promote religion. It is inevitable that where religion exists, that has any vitality or power, there must be organization, *i. e.*, a Church. So it is with all great ideas or human instincts or great common interests,—the only way to make them effective is to embody them in institutions; they must be organized.

Thus it is with our sense of justice and our common need of protection,—these great common interests compel to the organization of government with its taxes and ordinances and courts of law. We are inclined to find considerable fault with political doings and the way in which government is administered. But we should miss it terribly if we had no government.

Knowledge and intellectual training inevitably must embody themselves in schools, colleges, and other institutions of learning; the impulse of charity provides organizations for fostering and expressing charity. And so it is that all great common interests, great truths in all departments of life, must be organized in order that they may be expressed and made effective.

The Church is the organization of religion. The Christian Church is the one institution that exists for the purpose of cultivating and extending Christianity. There would be some religion in the world, if there were no religious organization or Church, for man is by nature a religious being. All men have some sense of needs that nothing but religion can supply. Man feels his helplessness in the hands of forces that he cannot control. Is there any Power that can? He cannot for one moment stop the wheels of time that are bearing him on to the grave. He feels his moral weakness, too, and need for reconciliation and forgiveness. Even the savage man has some dim sense of his need of that which the world of nature cannot supply. There would be religion in the world if there were not any Church.

The forces of the natural world would still exist, if there were no machinery for gathering up and applying those forces. There were cataracts flowing down steep places before men made machinery to use their power. But the power accomplished nothing without the machinery. There was electricity in the elements before men learned to construct batteries and instruments

and conductors to use it. What machinery is, in concentrating and applying the forces of nature, that organization is to the social and moral forces of humanity and to religion. There would be religion in the world if there were no Church, but it could not be effective for human welfare.

The Church is, so to speak, the machine for making moral and spiritual forces effective. The government with its legislatures, courts of law, and executive officers, is a machine whose proper end is justice and freedom. Schools and other institutions of learning are the machinery of education.

The value of a machine is to be estimated by what it can do. It is not an end in itself; it is a means,—a means for getting something accomplished. We do not value a machine because it is ancient or picturesque, but according to what it can do. The analogy between a society of human beings and a mere mechanical construction is not, of course, in all respects perfect; but there are strong points of resemblance, and the analogy does hold good in that the value of the organization, like the value of any other kind of machinery, is to be estimated according to how it fulfils its purpose.

The purpose of the Church is to extend the Kingdom of God throughout the world; it is to foster and promote spiritual life; or, to say the same thing in another way, it is to make people good; that is, it is to make them like Jesus Christ in character. These are only different ways of expressing the same idea. We ought to keep

ever in view this one great object for which the Church is organized.

We can conceive no higher aim for human effort than just this for which the Church exists,—to bring the Kingdom of God to the earth; to extend to all mankind the conception of man's high relationships, the hopes, the possibilities, that uplifting influence that the Christian Gospel brings. There is no other aim of life so high as that which the Christian Church invites us to adopt. There is no other institution or society that exists solely for that one purpose.

Now this purpose for which the Church exists could never be accomplished by unorganized, individual effort. Individuals die; but the Church lives on from age to age. By means of the organization of the Church, the influence of the individual life is gathered up, and passed on, and lives after we are gone. By means of the organized Church, we of to-day feel the good influence of lives that were lived long ago. By means of it the good we do to-day may live and grow in the world, when our individuality is forgotten.

The organized Church exists also to protect and preserve the truth of religion that has already been acquired. As the world's knowledge of science, and principles of education and government, have been a growth, and have come to be what they are by gradual progress from age to age, so it is with the best religious life and the highest apprehension of religious truth. Growth, intellectual or moral, is a process effected by

holding on to truth already gained, and adding to that. Growth is usually a slow process, and must be upon the old foundation. The tree must grow from its stock and roots. The added life must be unfolded from the germs of life within the tree.

Growth, too, in the moral and spiritual life must come out of the truth already gained. The truth of religion has been a growth as really as has the world's knowledge of science or principles of government or of education. The first condition of growth is that truth already gained must be preserved. The Church is the one means for preserving the truth that has been acquired.

If there had been no religious organization to preserve and hand down the vital truths of religion, they would have been lost. So, the only hope for the future good of mankind is the power of Christ in the world to-day. This power of Christ in human life is the only ground of hope that our civilization will not fail, and that humanity will at length be regenerated and saved.

To what do we owe it that this power of Christ is to some degree effective in the free government that we enjoy, in the advance of education, in the increased sense of the value of human life, and in a thousand ways men do not recognize,—to what do we owe it? We owe it to the Church. We owe it to the fact that religion was organized. We owe it to the fact that the life of the Christian religion was not left to the sole care of unorganized, individual effort, but that an institution

was established for the purpose of preserving, cherishing, and publishing to the world the Gospel of Christ.

Do you think that the feeble flame of truth that was committed to the care of a little handful of rather ordinary Jewish men in Palestine 1900 years ago would ever have enlightened the world, had it not been for the organization? We should never have heard of it. We owe it to the fact that there was an institution called the Christian Church, that sent out missionaries to our pagan ancestors in the forests of Europe, that we are lifted out of their paganism and savagery, and enjoy to some degree the blessings of a better civilization than theirs.

And yet there are multitudes in our land who do not know that they owe anything to the Church. They live on borrowed blessings for which they are not compelled to pay anything either in money or self-denial.

The Church is, indeed, not the source of power. The Spirit of the living God is the only fountainhead of life and energy. We are not to worship the Church, but always to worship God and Him only. We ought to value the Church—not for its own sake—but for its use in cherishing and diffusing life. We are not likely to value the Church too highly for what it really is, and for what it is designed to be. We may—and many do—set a wrong value on it, by valuing the organization for its own sake. Without the Spirit of God, organization is a dead thing; some Churches are dead things. The only value of the organization is in the life—

the spiritual life—which it cherishes and perpetuates.

The Church may be likened to the stalk and husk which preserve and protect the growing grain. They exist for the life of the grain. Apart from the grain, they are in themselves only straw and chaff. And just so we may say of religious organizations and Church activities,—if they do not minister to the increase of spiritual life, they are but straw and chaff.

Yet, though machinery is of no effect without power, and organization is useless without spiritual life, nevertheless the religious life of the world needs the Church, as surely as the growing grain needs the blade, the stalk, the husk.

Of course there is much at fault with the Church and its methods, just as there is much at fault with government, and with methods of education and business. The Church makes grievous mistakes, and fails often to promote spiritual life to any high degree. That is because it is made up of human beings. But as in the generations past the Church has been the means without which there would have been no Christianity in the world, so it is necessary for the time to come. If Christian truth and light are to make advancement and become clearer, stronger, more controlling, in the life of men, there must be the agency of the Church organization.

There are some who feel that the Church has often stood in the way of advancing growth and enlightenment. Yes, sometimes the Church has refused to rec-

ognize truth that it ought to recognize. But it is to be remembered that there can be no true growth and advance, except as it rests on old foundations. As long as the children of men continue to be human, there will be occasion to criticize the Church, but if the Kingdom of God is ever to come to this world, if human character is ever to be in any great degree lifted up and refined, and purified, there must be a Church.

Improved politics and better laws, and higher standards of education, are desirable, but they alone can never conquer the world's selfishness, and produce characters that are like Jesus Christ. The world needs the Church. There is no adequate foundation for an improved social order, and for a higher moral standard in society, except the Christian religion. The highest, noblest, most useful work that is done to-day in the world is the work of Christian missionaries in bearing to the nations of the earth the knowledge of Christ. It is the special work that Christ has given His Church to do. His parting words were,—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Individual, unorganized effort could never do this. This is a work that can be done only by the organization, the Christian Church.

As individuals all need the Church. We need the Christian fellowship which the Church affords. We need that recognition of our common relationship as children of our Heavenly Father, that is to be found in common prayer and common worship. We need too the

sacrifices which the Church calls upon us to make. There is a great deal of selfishness in the prevalent disposition to hold so lightly the obligation to Church attendance and Church support. We are often slow to recognize that our obligations are our highest privileges.

No higher privilege is afforded us to-day than that through the Church we are enabled to invest somewhat of our lives and our influence where they will live and bear fruit everlastingly.

(September 24, 1911.)

IX.

THAT WHICH WAS LOST

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—St. Luke 19: 10.

The ministry of Jesus Christ is a matter of interest and concern for every human being on the face of the earth. The need of the world—its most imperative need—is expressed by the word "Salvation". It needs to be saved. And Jesus Christ is the Saviour. This is one of His most descriptive titles. If He is anything to the world of humanity, He is a Saviour. It is the power that He brought into the world that is our hope that a noble manhood will not perish from the face of the earth, that human society will be saved from corruption, that the Kingdom of God will at length come to this world of ours, and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. The only ground of hope we can see for any glorious outcome of human history is the power of Christ in the world.

Without His salvation, mankind are lost. It is not

merely or chiefly that they are in danger of being lost in another world, and future life, but right here in this world there are multitudes of these lost ones. Go where you will, you will find the great need is that of lost souls, who are on the wrong road, who need the salvation of Christ.

It is to be observed that there are two ideas, somewhat different from each other, as to the meaning of the word "lost". We say a ship is lost when it strikes a reef; the rocks tear open the sides, and the crew and cargo sink beneath the waves. It is irretrievably lost. In Dante's great poem, the Inferno, the poet pictures the abode of the lost. Over the portal of this dark realm the poet saw inscribed the words: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." This has been the usual theological conception of the meaning of the term lost.

But there is another meaning of the word, that is more fully in accord with the general use of the term by Scripture writers—more in accord probably with what Jesus had in mind when He said: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." We say that a man is lost when he has missed his way to his destination. A man is lost when he does not know where he is, or in what direction to go to find the goal of his seeking. If the ruling purpose of our lives is not what it should be, then we are on the wrong road; we are lost.

In that pastoral land where the most of our sacred scriptures were written, flocks of sheep under the care

of their shepherds were familiar objects to all. Many symbols are taken by Scripture writers from the relations of the shepherd to his flock. The Psalmist sings: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." In the prophetic writings, the nation is often depicted as the flock of Jehovah. The prophet Ezekiel, who wrote during the seventy years of Captivity, describes how the shepherd goes out after the thunderstorm to call in his scattered and frightened sheep. He represents Jehovah as saying: "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock . . . so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers." (Ezekiel 34: 12, 13.)

These words of the ancient writings were probably in mind, when Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me." When He sent forth His disciples, He bade them: "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And so in the parable of St. Luke 15, Jesus says: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" It would appear that the meaning of the word "lost" in such passages as the text is symbolized by the scattered members of a flock. The lost are those who have strayed or have missed their way.

In the writings of the ancient prophets, it is the

nation that is addressed. Jehovah's flock is scattered and in exile. Jesus speaks to the individual. He comes to seek the one who is lost. The shepherd leaves the ninety and nine and goes after the one that is lost, until he finds it.

Jesus has come to save the lost by setting before us the right aim and purpose of life. He says to us all: "Follow Me!" He goes before, as the Eastern shepherd leads his flock; He saves the lost, by making Himself pattern and guide. Christ shows us that the only right kind of life is a religious life; that is, a life that before all else takes account of our relationship to God. Our relationship and our obligations to God afford us one fixed, unalterable point to determine the direction of life. It may happen that one who is lost in a forest, not knowing the direction to any fixed point, may wander all day, and find himself at night where he set out in the morning. So many of us go through life without any fixed, controlling purpose to do God's will. If our lives are not directed with reference to our eternal relationships, then we are wanderers in God's universe. Like the one lost in a forest, we may walk in a circle all our life long.

It is to be observed with reference to this deep need of humanity, that there is often in the words of Jesus a tone of pity. We read how on one occasion, "When He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." The condition

of the great multitude of human beings in pagan lands, India, China, Japan, seems to call for pity more than condemnation. Through no fault of their own, they are born into conditions of moral disadvantage. They know not in what direction to seek for life's highest good. Longing for the good of life, as do we all, yet impulse within and conditions without tend to draw them away from it. As regards that which is the only absolute good of life, they simply do not know the way. They do not know those higher relationships, fixed and eternal, by which to determine the way.

In the attitude of Jesus towards those whose moral disadvantages were great, there is a revelation of God's pity. It is not with any tone of hopelessness that Jesus says: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." It is the voice of compassion. We seem to see why publicans and sinners wanted to draw near to this man and hear Him.

But in the words of Jesus, there is not only a tone of deep compassion for the great multitude; there is also a tone of deep concern. Their condition awakened pity; it also called out anxious forebodings. No other teacher has ever addressed his fellow men with words of warning so earnest, so solemn. His is not only a mission of pity to the unfortunate: it is, before all else, to call sinners to repentance. The parable of the lost sheep expresses the divine compassion for those who are ignorant of the right way, those whose blindness is not so much their fault, as their misfortune. But the Son.

of man came to seek and to save not only those who are lost because they do not know the way, but also those who are wilfully blind. The parable of the Lost Sheep is supplemented by the parable of the Lost Son,—the prodigal Son. Here is pictured the experience of one who was lost, not through ignorance, but through his own wilfulness. Of that member of the flock that ignorantly strayed from the fold, it is said that the shepherd took it upon his shoulders, and brought it home. But the son who had wilfully gone away must of his own volition say: "I will arise and go to my father." Those whom Jesus found to be most hopelessly lost were not those whose disadvantages were greatest. It was not the "social outcasts" whom the Saviour found most inaccessible. The most hopelessly lost were those who could satisfy themselves with a superficial righteousness. They were those who observed the conventional proprieties, but did not concern themselves about the deeper realities of religion.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost,—those who wanted to gain the greatest good that life can give, and yet did not know in what direction to seek it. There are many now,—even among those who cultivate a little religion, as well as among those who do not,—who are at a loss in what direction to go for the supreme good. Jesus comes to be the Leader for the world of humanity that finds itself surrounded with mystery and uncertainty. He says to all: "Follow Me!"

Many religious teachers have, with more or less suc-

cess, pointed out the way men ought to go; but not the greatest of the Apostles would claim to be other than a follower. Jesus is not a follower of others. He says to all: "Come unto Me. Take My yoke. Learn of Me." In Him God comes near to us. In Him the moral beauty of God is revealed to us. He makes it clear that there is no possible salvation for us except the salvation of character, the salvation that consists in harmony of will with God.

There is within the inmost soul of everyone a voice that declares that to follow Christ is the way of life. Faith in Christ is not so much faith in the words He spoke as faith in our best convictions; for our deepest moral convictions are not merely "our convictions". They are the voice of God who worketh in us and with us,—to do His will.

(October 15, 1911.)

X.

HEAVEN OPENED

"And Jesus said unto him: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."—St. John 1: 51.

The disciple Nathaniel, to whom Jesus spoke these words, is one of whom we have but little particular knowledge. His name appears in the record on only two occasions. When first he was asked by the disciple Philip to come and see Jesus, he hesitated. He doubted whether "any good thing could come out of Nazareth". But he yielded to the earnest solicitation of his friend Philip, and set out to see the new teacher. As he drew near, Jesus greeted him with the words: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

Nathaniel was surprised to be thus addressed by one who, as he supposed, had no knowledge of him, and he replied to the salutation of Jesus: "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answered: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."

There was something in these words of Jesus, together with the impression of His personality, that won the immediate confidence of Nathaniel. With hearty recognition of the greatness of Jesus he exclaimed: "Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!"

Jesus answered: "Because I said, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Hereafter ye shall see heaven open; and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Nathaniel had evinced a quick discernment of Christ's royal greatness. His readiness to see and to feel the divine worth of Jesus showed that his spiritual faculties had been cultivated. He was a man who could see.

We do not see with our eyes, but with our minds. The mind uses the eye as a lens. What we see by means of our eyes depends upon our minds,—our intelligence. Without minds we could not see anything. Multitudes of people were in the presence of Jesus, who could not perceive "the Son of God, the King of Israel". They could see only a man from Nazareth. Earthly minds can see only earthly things. But there is one, this man Nathaniel, who can see. It is what Nathaniel is that enables him to see. It is his spiritual intelligence.

If a man cannot see the divineness of Christianity, it is of no use to argue the matter with him, or to rehearse the evidence and arguments commonly pre-

sented as proofs. It is like setting a blind man to study the science of optics, and the laws of light, for the benefit of his eyesight.

It was not some arbitrary favor that was to be conferred upon Nathaniel. It was not a miraculous revelation that was indicated when Jesus told him that hereafter he should see heaven open. It was just the natural result of the cultivation of his spiritual powers. It was what he was in character that enabled him to see.

All human souls have, at the least, some rudiments of this Godlike power of vision, this sense to distinguish between truth and untruth. It is the reflection of the divine in man. Did we but know what it signifies that we have in our souls the capacity to distinguish between truth and falsehood—between reality and unreality—should not we cherish it? This is the germ in our spirits wherein is unfolded our possibility of a heavenly vision. Beware of untruthfulness! Beware of unreality! Nathaniel had cultivated and developed his sensibility for the highest truth—his relation to God; therefore he so readily perceived and felt the greatness of Jesus' character. Therefore, too, he was one for whom it was possible that heaven might be open.

Jesus said: "Behold! he is one in whose spirit there is no guile." Heaven could never be disclosed to any spirit not free from guile. To lack sincerity, truthfulness of heart or life, shuts the door of heaven against the spirit. The pure in heart shall see God. By the pure heart is meant the candid spirit, the heart open

to the light of truth. One who lives a life of pretence and unreality cannot see heaven open. All sin darkens the soul—shuts out heaven's light.

But let us not suppose, because Nathaniel was said to be "without guile", that he was credulous, easily imposed upon. His freedom from guile was not a childishness to accept anything told him without question. The first impulse of this truth-loving man was to question the report concerning Jesus. No one can fully appreciate truth and goodness, who does not use his critical faculties to separate the kernel from the husk. The skepticism of Nathaniel was not of the kind that desires to evade the truth, but that determines to know the truth and nothing but the truth. He will not deceive himself, nor be deceived by others. He will know the truth.

The skies behold their beauty mirrored in the clear, transparent flood. To the sincere, truth-loving soul, heaven is open and the pure in heart see God. Insincerity, guile, false pretence, bear their own curse within. The untruthful spirit lives in a world of empty mockery. Its life is unreal, disappointing. Because Nathaniel was without guile, it followed that he must be alive to the transcendent beauty of the character of Jesus. He cries out at once: "Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel."

Susceptibility to Christ's moral beauty is always and everywhere a test of character. It was no miracle that heaven should be open to one whose moral perceptions

were so clear and true. To be sure, if we think of heaven as belonging to that class of objects to be discovered with telescopes or spy glasses, as if it were located just beyond the clouds, or in some mysterious corner of the material fabric, then there would seem to be no necessary connection between Nathaniel's quick apprehension of Christ's greatness, and the fact that he is one who shall see heaven open. But if we have learned that it is to the moral sense, and only to the moral sense within, that heaven can be disclosed, then we may understand how such a character as Nathaniel is right on the way to see heaven open.

The faculty for beholding heaven, the ability to appropriate its treasures, is a human faculty as truly as the faculty for beholding the earth and appropriating its treasures. It used to be the case that theologians made a broad distinction between what they termed "natural" and "revealed truth", between "natural religion" and "revealed religion". But these terms are not much used now. It has come to be perceived that God is *in the world* as well as *above it,* and whatever truth man finds, in any department of the universe, is a revelation from God. All truth is revealed truth. Our five bodily senses are the windows of the soul through which it looks out on the world of matter and sense. Whichever way our spirits turn, a revealing spirit meets us, addresses us. The skies, the fields, the forests, speak to us. The flowers have meaning for us. The landscape appeals to us. An intelligent spirit

appeals to our intelligence. Our sense of beauty, of harmony, of order, is addressed through these objects of nature.

The world of material objects, the earth, fields, flowers, and forests, could not mean anything to us—they would be as blank as a dungeon wall,—were it not that a living, intelligent Spirit seeks to reveal Himself to us in these things. God in His world speaks to our spirits. Were it not that the Being who creates and upholds this material framework corresponds to our minds, and our minds have some correspondence to Him, there could be no meaning for us in these objects of nature.

The beauty, the sublimity, the order, and harmony, and shades of significance, too numerous to rehearse, which the material creation bears in upon our spirits, are a revelation of that Infinite Spirit, who was before all things, and by whom all things consist.

Within the last century, man's knowledge of the material world has been greatly enlarged, yet the facts and the forces of the universe have been always the same. The late discovered natural sciences have always been involved in the constitution of the material universe. They have always been uttering the same voice, but man's capacity for receiving the revelation of the material universe was wanting.

The photographic plate must be prepared before it can receive and hold the image which the light paints upon its surface. The human mind has been many gen-

erations in coming to that state of preparation when the facts and systems of truth, that we call the natural sciences, could be photographed upon it. To the trained, scientific observer of to-day, the material heaven and earth open their doors and unfold their message. And likewise, to the cultivated faculty of moral discernment, heaven is open.

Heaven is just as near as earth, and its gates are just as wide open. But what is the earth to one whose mind cannot receive a revelation of order, of beauty? On every hand God's universe is full of wealth that might minister to the joy and the completeness of our lives. But strait is the gate and narrow is the way, that leads to any worthy realm of truth and joy. However brightly the sun shines, it does not reveal anything to a rock. To receive a revelation, there must be a sense receptive to what is revealed.

It follows that what life is to us must depend chiefly on our capacity for receiving revelation. The enlargement of human knowledge in all its departments has been a growth into larger revelations of the wealth and splendor of God's universe. In the perception of beauty, we receive a revelation that comes from the Infinite Spirit who is within His creation. Beauty cannot be revealed to a mere animal. It is because man is made in the image of God that his soul can receive a revelation of beauty. One may hear the sound of the most exquisite symphony, and yet not hear its music, because music in its essence is more than sound. It is a revela-

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tion to our spirits. None but spiritual beings can hear music.

Everywhere the universe is resonant with divine harmonies; the gates of morning, noon, and night open wide to unfold revelations of beauty. If we do not apprehend this wealth and beauty, it is not for lack of revelation, but for lack of receptivity on our part. If the faculties God has given us were better educated and developed, we should know better what a world of beauty is open to us. The realms of astronomy, geology, mechanical science, have always been as accessible as they are now, but it is only to faculties cultivated and prepared that the kingdom of scientific knowledge, or the kingdom of art, or the Kingdom of Heaven, stands open.

And yet there are those who think that a spirit might come from the other world and tell us all about heaven. They think it is the place they are in that prevents their seeing heaven open. They imagine there is some *place* to which they might go and be in heaven. Or perhaps they think that to die will in some wonderful way "open heaven".

But not to the material sense can heaven be open. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, . . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Heavenly things, spiritual realities can be revealed only to the spirit wherein is no guile. It is not to the keenest intellectual powers, or the most refined artistic sense,

but to the moral and spiritual perceptions only, that heaven may be open. To the disciple Nathaniel, whose pure and guileless spirit reflected the spirit of the Master, to this man whose moral sense is so alive to the kingliness of Christ's character that he knows Him to be the Son of God, the King of Israel,—no wonder that to his vision heaven shall presently stand open, and he shall see its messengers going and coming in a ministry to human needs.

How tireless are mankind in their efforts to win earthly possessions, or to enter the kingdom of intellectual attainment, or some realm of temporal possessions! To cross the seas and stand in the presence of the immortal treasures of art, does not bring a revelation of their beauty to a mind unprepared. To die is not to go to heaven; to see heaven open depends not on *where* we are, but on *what* we are.

Heaven is always open, but our vision is clouded, our perception is dim. It is not sufficient to have books of revelation; books can furnish no revelation except there be in us the spiritual receptivity that makes revelation possible for us. He who would see heaven open must behold it reflected in the guilelessness, the sincerity, the purity, of his own spirit.

Heaven is always open. Says the writer of the Book of Revelation:

"I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, having the glory of God."

"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day,

for there shall be no night there. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

(Whitsunday, 1893.)

XI.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."—Genesis 49: 22, 23, 24.

With respect to literary merit, the story of Joseph as given in the Book of Genesis is one of the first narratives in all literature. Moreover, the author of the story is deeply impressed with certain great moral truths which it is the purpose of this narrative to unfold and emphasize. First, That nothing of great value in life can be possessed without effort and struggle; Second, The inevitableness of the penalty of sin; Third, The presence and agency of God in the individual lives of men.

A superficial view of the story of Joseph might leave the impression that it is a sort of fairy tale, where by magic and good luck the hero is lifted from the depths

of adversity to the top round of prosperity. A good boy, unjustly hated and sold into slavery by his own brothers, through a sudden turn of fortune rises to honor, wears a gold chain, rides in a chariot, and finishes his career by triumphing gloriously over his wicked brothers.

No doubt Joseph inherited a nature of unusual strength and integrity, and the story may indicate that much of his experience was quite extraordinary. Yet the great interest of his life depends on what he had in common with ordinary mortals. The same principles were effective in his life that apply to us all. His example illustrates the truth that character must be the fruit of discipline. His is not a success that is merely the result of extraordinary natural endowments and uncommonly good luck. His was not a victory without a struggle. "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and wounded him," says the legend.

The writer does not represent that Joseph, as a boy, was a faultless character, nor that his brothers had no ground for their jealousy and dislike. The story runs: "Now Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors. And when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him."

The gift of a robe of many colors to the favorite son seems like a trifling thing to be recorded in history, yet as the story develops it is seen that on an incident so slight depended the building up of a great nation,

and, in the course of subsequent history, the fate of millions of human beings.

The significance of the gift was that this was the kind of robe worn by men of exalted rank. It was the dress of a prince and not adapted to a shepherd. In the primitive life of those nomadic races to which the Hebrews then belonged, there was hard, coarse work to be done. They wandered over wild, uncultivated regions. In caring for their flocks, they had to climb mountains, ford rivers, and contend with wild beasts. The dress of princes would be ill-suited for their work. The envy of Joseph's brethren was not merely because Joseph's coat was better than theirs, but it was what the dress indicated. Perhaps Joseph was to be heir of his father's wealth. He was to be spared the hard toil that fell to their lot. We cannot doubt that Joseph's brethren had their trials, though they were not borne with magnanimity.

It was at about this time that Joseph began to dream, and the account of his dreams which he gave to the family circle was not calculated to allay the jealousy of his brothers. His sleeping visions doubtless took their color from the thoughts of his waking hours. Two of his dreams are given,—specimens of his outlook upon life. They are substantially one in their significance. In the account of the first he is described as artlessly saying to his brothers:

"Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. For, behold we were binding sheaves in the

field, and, lo, my sheaf stood upright; and, behold your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf."

In his second dream, he rises above the earth, and the sun, moon, and stars do him homage. It would not seem to require supernatural wisdom on the part of his brothers to understand the purport of these dreams; and we can readily believe the account of the writer who tells us that they could not speak peaceably to him.

The dreams of Joseph are the universal dreams of youth. It is the common experience of the young, just budding into maturity, to dream. A new consciousness of individuality is awakened. There is a new sense of self-importance and the feeling as though the world was looking on and I could not very well be spared. The dreams of Joseph are the bright anticipations of youth, the promise of some great good that life is going to fulfil for us. They were the same for the shepherd boy on the plains of Hebron four thousand years ago, that they are for the young man or woman of to-day.

But Joseph's dreams came true. Yes, and so may yours come true, if that day when your character is put to the test shall bring to light innate strength and purity and nobility of soul like that which made Joseph a prince. God was in those dreams of Joseph, and God is in your dreams. Those dreams were the human thoughts of a very human boy, and they were also divine prophecies. They were divine intimations of what

might be, yes, of what was to be. The dreams of youth the world over,—they are divine prophecies of what may be yours, if you will.

You remember how the mother of the disciples James and John said to Jesus, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom". But Jesus answered: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." There is a throne for everyone who will take it. It is that moral elevation to which each one may ascend who is always loyal to God and to conscience.

But we are not here in this world to make present happiness the aim of life. We are here that we may be educated. What would faith in God be, if there were no dark providences? What would loyalty to conscience be, if it never required us to do or to endure anything unpleasant? Those who seek to avoid everything difficult, and to have an easy time, never become princes in any sphere of action. The coat of many colors that the petted son of Jacob wore had to be rent and dipped in blood. They who are rising to thrones in the Kingdom, as day by day the glory of the Son of Man appears, are not the self-indulgent souls. It is they who endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

It is the common experience of those who undertake

the best work that they must be exposed to the arrows of jealousy, fault-finding, and opposition.

Those names which are to-day held in highest honor are names of those who in their day had to meet a conflict of persecution and opposition. It was the severe crucible of trial through which Joseph passed that fitted him for a prince. To go from the free life of his father's tent, to be a household drudge in a strange land, was a bitter allotment. To be sold by his own brothers to wandering slave dealers was cruel. Hard-hearted men as they were, twenty years after, time had done nothing to obliterate from their memory that pathetic scene when the slave dealers bore away their young brother. His cries still rung in their ears, and they said: "We saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

And here is suggested another important truth with which the writer of this story was deeply impressed. It is a great mistake to suppose that we have done with our past. We carry it ever with us. It is like our shadow. It goes when we go, and stands when we stand. Not only does the guilty conscience remain to torment the one who has done a cruel wrong, but outward events often work together to bring him face to face with the past. Joseph's brothers had done everything they could to put him out of the way. They had done with him. They were rid of that troublesome dreamer. They believed that in time their own consciences would cease

to reproach them. When lo! years after, that old sin starts up and looks them in the face. It was a terrible hour for these men when they heard from this stranger's lips the words: "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." There is no oblivion where our past can be buried so that we are done with it forever.

God was in it all. He was working out of all these human deeds and events His own mighty designs. This would appear to be the leading thought of the whole narrative. Four times over the writer puts into the mouth of Joseph the assertion that it was all God's doing. "It was not you that sent me hither, but God." . . . "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." The writer feels strongly, not only how great and far-reaching are God's designs, but also, how minute and particular is God's regard for our human lives and deeds.

God had regard to the dreams of the little Hebrew boy, to the father's fondness, to the envy of the shepherd brothers, to the wandering Gipsy band, to the calumny of Potiphar's wife, to Pharaoh on his throne. All our lives are lived in the presence of God. His hand touches us all. He guides our lives just as surely as He guided Joseph's life. His hand is hidden from our sight in the process of things, but it is evident in the outcome, and is certain in every step we take.

It is because we all live in the presence of God, because we all live to God, that the penalty of sin is inevitable. Because we all live in God, neither time

nor space can remove the evil doer from the results of his deeds. And it is also because God's purposes take account of each one of us, because He has a plan for each one, that life is for discipline and education.

We should hardly have thought that the half-spoiled child, whom Jacob was so carefully shielding from the hardships of life, had much kingly fiber in his frame. We should not have supposed that the loquacious boy, who told about his dreams, would have done more than dream. He would not, had he stayed in the shelter of his father's tent. To dream dreams, and wear a pretty tunic, would never have made him a prince. It was hard trials, nobly borne, that exalted him. Had he continued to live the life of the favorite child of the household, the whole family would have perished in the famine, in default of any help he could have rendered.

It is true that many yield to temptations, and appear to be weakened by trials. When the world deals harshly with them, they become misanthropic. They lose faith in God, and faith in their fellow men. Blessed are they who trust God in darkness as in the brightness. No one who does the service to which God appoints him will find life to be a holiday. It did not seem as though that path where Joseph went, when the Midianites bore him away to Egypt and to slavery, was going to conduct him to royalty. But, as he told his brothers, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, to save much people alive."

God's meaning for us is always good. He always seeks to save, not to destroy. God's penalties are meant for good,—they are to save. It is because He would save wrong doers that he will not suffer man's evil deeds to fall into oblivion, and be forgotten. God's design is always good. 'Tis true His path is often dark, and unbelief is sure to wander from it. The way of duty is never without difficulty, but it is always safe. They who faithfully follow it find that it leads to freedom and a throne.

(June, 1907.)

XII.

PUTTING AWAY CHILDISH THINGS

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."—I Corinthians 13: 9, 10, 11.

It is a fact worthy of our notice, that these are the words of a man who wrote a very large part of the New Testament. The epistles of St. Paul comprise at least a fourth part of the entire New Testament Scriptures. We have, then, the testimony of the author himself, that his knowledge and his teaching or prophesying are imperfect. The Apostle does not claim that his teaching is absolutely free from error. Only an infinite mind can grasp the totality of things, and know all things in all their relations. Only the Infinite Mind has perfect knowledge. But although we have not perfect knowledge, yet the Apostle says: "We know in part." We do have real knowledge of God.

It cannot be that we are children of the Heavenly

Father, and yet have no real knowledge of Him in whose likeness we are. If we think of God at all, we are obliged to think of Him with our human thoughts. We have no knowledge of any kind of goodness except human goodness. We can worship no quality in God except it be some kind of excellence that we have experienced or seen expressed in human lives. Our ideas are the outgrowth of our experience, and we cannot get outside human experience. Therefore, if we think of God, we are obliged to invest our thoughts with a human likeness. And although our finite, human thoughts are not adequate to fathom God's greatness or estimate His goodness, yet there is reality in our human thoughts of God. Because our thinking spirits are formed in the image and likeness of God, therefore our thoughts may take hold of reality, though they be not perfect. There is some of the reality of sunlight in the sun's image as reflected from the surface of the clear water. There is some of the reality of God-likeness reflected from the lives of the greatest and best of mankind. It is not our human thoughts of God that we need to put away as "childish things", but we need to beware of the disposition to make to ourselves a God having human defects.

A child growing up in a Christian community, and being religiously taught, will almost invariably have some mental picture of God. The picture will be that of a human form. He is told that God sees all things. He can have no idea of what seeing is except from his own experience. He can think of God as hearing and

speaking only with a human voice and human words. It is quite right that a child's first thought of God should be of one in the form of a man, a magnified human being. He cannot think otherwise. This conception of God is imperfect. He only knows in part. But there are essential elements of truth in this partial apprehension of God. This thought is sufficient for the child's religion. It is the stepping-stone wherewith he may rise to a higher grasp of truth.

Later the growing spirit may conceive God to be in the likeness of an earthly monarch. He is pictured as sitting on a throne like that of a human king. This picture is drawn from the court of an earthly monarch. He is surrounded by saints and angels who sing his praises. Nearness to God will be thought of as nearness of space. Holy places will seem to furnish special access to His presence. These conceptions of God in the form of a human monarch, although partial and imperfect, may have their use and help in their way to a better and higher thought.

The Apostle says: "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face." Or as the Revised Version has it: "For now we see in a mirror, darkly." We do not see God by direct vision, but divine qualities may be reflected from human lives, and human activities. The child forms his idea of God very much from what his parents are. As by reflection in a mirror, the child learns divine relations from human relations. There are elements of truth in the conceptions of God as

seated upon a throne and surrounded with adoring worshippers. So far as this imagery reflects to us God's power, authority, and goodness, it contains truth, though it be partial. But when it becomes possible for us to ascend to some higher conception of God, some fuller, completer knowledge, these imperfect ideas and images may become our idols. They are idols, if we permit our sense of divine relations to be limited by them.

The history of the religious experience of the child is a miniature of the religious experience of the human race. The human race began where every child begins. The revelation of God to human beings must of necessity correspond with their capacity for receiving a revelation. A child's first lessons at school must be limited by the capacity of the child. So God's revelation to the race or to the individual must vary with the capacity to learn. We ought always to be growing in our knowledge and thought of God. If we grow, we shall sometimes need to put away childish things. For to grow in knowledge is to outgrow some limited conceptions.

Probably a better revelation of God is given us to-day than has been afforded to any former generation. It is the revelation of the Infinite God as having His real throne and presence within the spirit of each child of man. It is the revelation of the Divine Friend, as being nearer to us than any earthly friend can be. It is the revelation of God as within His universe, instead of One whose dwelling place is in the remote heavens.

The worship of the Virgin Mary and the adoration of saints had their beginning in the Christian Church at a time when men were taught to think of God as a stern judge in a very distant heaven. It was an age when the motive of fear was more relied upon as a persuasive to piety than the motive of love. Human hearts, the world over, feel the need of a Divine Friend. A God who is more to be feared than loved does not answer the instinctive longing of our hearts. That Divine Friendship, which believers failed to find in the Church's representation of God, was partly supplied in the worship of the Mother of our Lord. This was not the only cause which prompted men to seek the intercession of departed saints, yet it was probably the chief cause that made adoration of the Virgin Mary attractive. Hearts that had received the revelation of God as the Heavenly Father, whose throne is in the human spirit, who is nearer, more compassionate, more loving, than any saint or angel or any earthly friend, would hardly desire the intercession of any created being.

But even those things which we count as error in religious belief often contain some important truth for those who cherish them. We used to be taught that there were two kinds of religion, and only two kinds,—true and false. Christianity was deemed to be the only true religion. Yet those forms of religion which a fuller and better revelation of God has left behind need not be regarded as totally false religions, but rather as lower forms of truth.

This suggests the folly of cherishing bitterness towards those whose religious beliefs are different from our own. It is better that men should adore the Virgin Mary than not to adore any conception of transcendent purity and love. It may be better to seek the intercession of saints, than to be in the condition of those who have no celestial friendships. There must always be differences in religious opinion. If we grow from childhood to maturity in our thinking, we must differ from ourselves many times. We must, if we make any advance in knowledge, sometimes put away childish things.

It is evident that no Church unity can be founded on uniformity of religious thought and belief. The Apostle Paul seems to say that our present religious knowledge will be done away in the light of a complete revelation of God that is coming. "When that which is complete is come, then that which is partial shall be done away." As the child's first thought of God, as a magnificent human being, melts away in his growing thought of God as spirit, so our present forms of apprehending truth are not finalities.

Is our religious knowledge, then, of little value, because it is not perfect and final? Just as the child's knowledge is of inestimable value as the stepping stone to a larger and more complete understanding, so our religious knowledge of to-day may be of unspeakable worth, if we apply it. Our knowledge is of use to us just so far as it makes God's presence a vivid fact to

our spirits; just so far as it becomes a power transforming our lives and impelling us to duty. If our supposed advance in religious knowledge has only served to chill the fervor of our devotion; if it has only dimmed our sense of the nearness of that spiritual world, then the condition of the most ignorant believer, whose life is swayed by Christian faith, whose days are brightened by Christian hope, whose spirit is dominated by Christian love, is infinitely to be preferred.

There can be no real advance in religious knowledge that does not contribute to the elevation of the moral life, the purity and excellence of character. Faith, hope, and love, says the Apostle at the close of this wonderful chapter, are the abiding elements of our religion. These are the same in essence now, that they were in the days of the Patriarch Abraham. They will continue to be the same when the earth and heavens that now are shall have passed away. Our present forms of thought will change and cease to be, but faith and hope and love abide, and will become the medium of that direct vision of those who will see face to face.

(February 2, 1913. The Purification.)

XIII.

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—II Corinthians 5: 17.

When the Apostle Paul wrote these words to the people in Corinth, Christianity was a new thing in the world. We can hardly imagine such a time. Christianity is so associated in our minds with custom and tradition and beliefs, old and time-honored, that we cannot easily think of it as having been something very new. Yet many of those to whom it was first proclaimed, by Jesus Himself and His Apostles, deemed it not only very new, but also very destructive. To the Jewish scribes and teachers of religion, the teaching of Jesus appeared to contradict their Bible. Their Bible was, of course, all included in what we call the Old Testament. One principal accusation brought against Jesus and His Apostles, was that they taught things contrary to the law of Moses. That meant, for them, things contrary to their Bible.

And not to the Jew only, did the Gospel seem like a new thing; to the enlightened minds of the Greek and Roman cities the doctrines of Christianity seemed the very latest of all philosophies. When Paul arrived at Athens, where, we are told, there were many citizens and visitors, who "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear, some new thing", these hunters for novelty at first seemed ready to hear, because expecting something new. They said to the Apostle, "Tell us about this new teaching, for thou bringest certain strange things to our ears."

Although Jesus declared with emphasis that He had not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil, yet He did put a different meaning into their Bible, a more spiritual meaning, than any prophet had ever perceived before. A radical change was made in the ideas that had prevailed concerning the prophecies of Israel's Messiah, and concerning the Kingdom of God. More radical than all else was the change in men's thought of God.

The one important question about any religion is in respect to its apprehension of God. What qualities does it ascribe to God? What does it reverence and worship as divine? For what is true religion? It is taking God into our lives. It is God dwelling in us and we in Him. Human spirits are created for union with God, oneness with Him. It is then of great importance that we cherish right thoughts of God, specially as regards those moral qualities that we must seek in order

to be one with Him. Because only in moral likeness is oneness with God to be found. To worship God is not simply to admire at a distance; it is to seek likeness to Him whom we worship. To worship God is to seek correspondence of spirit with Him. It is to take Him into our spirits, to do His will. We ourselves become like that which we truly worship.

And so, "in the fulness of time", when the world was prepared to understand it, a new Revelation of God was given in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The God and Father of all, who is revealed in the life of Christ, the God whom St. Paul worshipped and preached, is a different Being from the God whom the prophet Elijah would serve by calling down fire from heaven upon idolaters. The God whom Jesus makes known, when He says: "Love your enemies, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven," is a different Being from the God whom the author of the 137th Psalm had in mind, when he cursed his enemies, the people of Babylon, and said, "Blessed shall he be who taketh thy little children, and dasheth them against the stones."

By "a different God" is meant a fuller, more complete revelation of God. That is what is at the core of Christianity. That is what constitutes the heart and substance of the work accomplished by Jesus Christ. God was not changed in any respect, for "He changeth not," but the Eternal was made known in His more essential being, His goodness.

This new and more complete revelation of God called for a "New Testament", a New Covenant, to record the better apprehension of God that Jesus had brought to men.

This new Bible, which Christianity produced, is pervaded by the thought that a new power is manifested in the world of human life. It says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new* creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become *new*." It exhorts us to "Walk in *newness* of life."

Christianity came to the world as a new teaching; but, more than that, it brought a new and divine power. It made known, in the life of Jesus, a new manhood. The new manhood is the Spirit of God dwelling in the human spirit. The new force in human history is the power of the Spirit of God, working in and through the lives of those who receive this Spirit.

When spring comes, and the plants and trees unfold a new life and beauty, there is, as it were, a new creation, which comes as a growth and unfolding of the old. It is not a revolution, that uproots and destroys, but it is an evolution, developing and bringing out the possibilities that were lying dormant in the old earth,—possibilities that could not be realized till the power of the Creator touched the earth in the sunshine and breathed in the air of spring.

When we consider what kind of world this is, how deeply in bondage to selfishness; what kind of motives dominate the lives of mankind; when we take into

account the political corruption and commercial greed; the insufficiency of the churches as centers of spiritual power and enlightenment; it might seem impossible that such a world as ours could ever be transformed into a veritable Kingdom of God.

The first generation of Christians appears to have cherished the expectation that the Kingdom of Heaven was very soon coming to the earth. But they found mankind so bad, so reluctant to receive the Gospel, that they could conceive of God's Kingdom coming in no way except in catastrophe to destroy the wicked. When, however, generations passed, and the expected catastrophe did not come, it is no wonder that the prevalent thought was that the Kingdom of Heaven was to be looked for only in the next world, and in a future life.

The moral growth and advance of the world during the nineteen centuries of the Christian era has indeed been slow. There have been centuries, when perhaps no improvement could be perceived. But as the sunshine has a little more power at the end of winter than at the beginning, so the power of Christ's life and character grows stronger with the lapse of time. Christian principle has more power in the world than it had ages ago. There are millions more of pure, unselfish lives in the world now, than there were in that world of Roman Imperialism to which the Gospel first came.

There comes a time in the month of May, when the increasing warmth of the sun's rays becomes diffused throughout the soil, the roots of the plants begin to

extend, and we awake some morning to find that there has been more growth in a single night than in all the month before.

We are yet in the early springtime of the world's moral growth and development; but the germs of the veritable Kingdom of God on earth are here. The summer of its luxuriance and beauty is still in the future, perhaps many generations away, but come it must. We may be sure that God has not wrought through countless ages past towards the coming of His kingdom to have His plan frustrated at this stage of growth.

It is true that not every blossom of spring, that seems to give promise of fruit, ever comes to fulfilment. Hundreds of blossoms fall fruitless to the ground. And it may be so with the spiritual possibilities of mankind. Jesus seems to teach that eternal life is an achievement. It is something to be won by the soul's own struggle.

The condition necessary to the life of the Christian, is to be "in Christ". The Apostle says: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The expression, "in Christ", is often used by St. Paul. Sometimes he says, "Christ in you". To be *in* Christ is a different thing from merely being *with* Him. In a Christian land, where the light of Christian truth is shining, almost all are, in a degree, *with* Christ. We have always heard much about Him. We all have much of that kind of knowledge of Christ that may be gained by acquaintance with the catechism and the Creed. It has

been said that a creed, a belief, is like a carriage that may take us to our friend, but cannot put us in communion with him.

We are *with* Christ, when we hear about Him; when we read the Gospel, when we go to church, when we have an intellectual belief in Him and in His religion. We are *in* Christ, when we love what He loved, when we put His spirit into our actions. We are in Christ, when the same Spirit that was in Him is in us, and sways our lives. The Christian religion is the recognition of this peculiar relationship to Christ, that we have to none other. It is the new manhood that Christ introduced and illustrated. It is this life reproduced in every faithful follower of Him. The newness which Christianity brings is not merely some new doctrines, some new teaching;—it is new life. Christianity is living, human spirits, dwelt in by the Spirit of Christ. It is the true and normal life of us all; it is what God has constituted us for.

And yet, what a new thing it is in this old pagan world of ours! How utterly opposed to the old, selfish, self-seeking instincts of our natural propensities. Christ and Christianity are here to set up a new kingdom, to bring a new manhood, a new life, with new ideals, new motives.

This new creation begins, not by a little superficial reformation on the outside of life, but by a new creation within. It is not new doctrines that we most need, but new life. Our great need is not to be taught some

new truth, but to have our perception quickened to see and apply the truth we have. This was what Christ said: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Christ did not make it His first concern to introduce a new religion, but to heal spiritual blindness, to bring light, that men might perceive the truth which they already had. We do not need to change our religion, but we need a deeper apprehension, and a more faithful application to life, of the truth we already have.

The world indeed owes a great deal to those who have labored to improve the outward conditions of human society. We call them Reformers, those who strive for new and better laws, new conditions, and institutions. Their labors are often of great benefit. Before the Kingdom of God comes in its perfection to human society,—laws, governments, social institutions, will have to be reformed. Everyone who is actuated by the spirit of Christ must sympathize with such movements of reform. But these things are on the surface. The millennium will not come as the result of new laws and customs. They cannot bring men into oneness of spirit with Christ.

We sometimes hear the objection made that Jesus did not give much attention to social reforms. He did not take up the problems of modern civilization. He did not set about abolishing slavery, as it existed under the Roman government. He did not devote Himself to the cause of temperance. He did not head a party that would make laws more just towards working men.

He did not attack the political corruption of His time.

All this is true, but we may see why He did not devote His life to mere superficial reforms. He gave Himself, His life, to the implanting of principles which in their growth and development are destined to make all things new. So far as any reform is of benefit to humanity, Christ and Christianity must sympathize with its promotion. But Christianity is more than mere reform. It is a new creation, a new manhood, swayed by the Living Spirit of Christ. It is more than a reform of human society; it is the Kingdom of God on earth. The core of it is just the opposite of self-seeking; it is self-sacrificing Love. The root of Christianity is deeper than form or reforms. Christ comes to teach, to unfold new and better thoughts of God; but more than that He comes to bring us to God. To receive Christ is to receive new motives, new purpose of life, a new type of character. Christ has raised the quality of manhood. The new heavens and the new earth, for which mankind looks, are not the work of reformers; they are the new creation by the Spirit of God.

When the spirit of love has more power in society than the spirit of self-seeking, then the Kingdom of God will be here: "Old things will pass away; behold, all things will become new!"

(January 9, 1910.)

XIV.

THE WORD OF GOD

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."—Hebrews 4: 12-13.

When we meet with this phrase—the Word of God—we are apt to think of the Bible. That is a common term among Christians now to designate the Sacred Scriptures; but it was not so when this Epistle was written. This term is never used by the Scripture writers themselves to designate the sacred volume. What the writer here means by "the word of God" is the direct address of the Spirit of God to our spirits within us. God has given us intelligent spirits, susceptible of impressions from the events and experiences of life. The world and life have meaning for us—the changing seasons, the passing years, the duties of life,

the joy and sorrow—the Living God is in them all, speaking directly to our spirits.

"The word of God is quick and powerful." *Quick* here means *living.* The use is the same as in the Creed. The Word of God is a living word, and comes in the living events of to-day. It is not merely some ancient writings,—things spoken to men of old time. What the writer seeks to emphasize is that we are dealing directly with God to-day.

This writing is called "The Epistle to the Hebrews". It is not known definitely to whom it was addressed, nor by whom it was written, but by its references to the temple, its worship and priesthood, it seems evident that it was written to a community of Hebrew Christians of the first century. They have suffered persecution for their faith, but have remained stedfast thus far. The first glow of enthusiasm in these Christian converts is getting a little cool; further persecution is in prospect, and the writer is intensely concerned lest they fail to meet the trial; lest they relapse from the faith.

The central purpose of the Epistle is to arouse and call to renewed life their Christian confidence. As we read, we feel the intense concern of the writer for those whom he addresses. One principal thought that pervades the Epistle is that they are dealing directly with the Living God. He reminds them of the warning given to their forefathers in the 95th Psalm: "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" Four times these words are quoted. What the writer

seeks especially to bring home to them is that we are dealing directly with God to-day. His voice speaks to every soul of man.

The language of human speech was a growth from imperfect beginnings, as were the other arts of life. Language continues to grow and be modified according to the condition and intelligence of those who use it. Barbarous people have language corresponding with their condition. The earliest inhabitants of the earth were not furnished at first with a language of speech and the power of vocal utterance. These are acquired arts, like the art of writing or the art of printing. Without the art of speech, the race must have remained in a condition little above the brute creation. Yet, as no great artist was ever able to express by his art all the beauty that his spirit beheld, so no prophet was ever able perfectly to express that Word of God that was in his spirit. No human words can fully express the Word of God.

For, what are words? Words are human contrivances to represent the thoughts of our minds. Thoughts are invisible and intangible, and cannot be precisely conveyed from one to another. Words, written or spoken, are contrivances by which we human beings try to communicate with one another across barriers,—barriers which we ourselves cannot pass. Words are signs of thought. An impassable barrier separates each human spirit from every other one, even from one's nearest friends. Words are our expedients for sending mes-

sages to spirits we cannot see or approach. Words are conventional signs by which we signal to other solitary voyagers on the sea of life. They are like lights from ships that pass in the night.

From the fact that human language is a purely human art,—as truly as is the art of drawing, painting, or sculpture,—it follows that no perfect or infallible expression of truth can be made in human words. No words can adequately express eternal reality. Words are, on the whole, our most effective device for conveying to one another our human thoughts; but, like other human devices, they are very imperfect.

A likeness of God, a description that is perfect and infallible, can no more be put into words and phrases, than it can be put into images of wood and stone, or expressed by the art of the painter. An infallible book is as impossible as an infallible graven image. There is no other way, to be sure, by which we seem to communicate so directly with our fellow men, understand their thoughts, and come near them, as by means of spoken words. And therefore, this feeling has often been cherished that God could address us more directly by means of some human words, than in some other way. But this implies a conception of God, as though He were separated from us, as other human spirits are separated from us, by barriers, and did not enter directly into our spirits. But God is not removed from us by any barriers of space, so that we can communicate with Him only by means of sacred writings. God is not

subject to our human limitations in addressing us.

The writer of this Epistle likens the Word of God to a two-edged sword, "piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart." By the figure of the piercing sword, that divides soul and spirit, he seems to portray the fact that God speaks to us from within our own spirits. The Word of the Living God is not merely some words in a book, nor spoken words that fall upon the outward ear. God addresses us from within our own souls. God's word to us comes in the contact of spirit with spirit. God created not only the light, but the eye that beholds the light. God not only addresses our spirits from without; He also creates our spirits from within. The Word of God is a living expression of God Himself.

And says the writer: "There is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." The Word of God is more than words in a human language, addressed to men in ancient times. The Bible, which in popular usage is called "The Word of God", has been one of the most important means of making God known to the world. We cannot esteem the sacred scriptures too highly;—but we may esteem them wrongly. The writer urges the consideration that there is a more direct and personal address of God than even the Scripture writings. It is the living Spirit of God that is in direct contact with our spirits.

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

It is not then with some words of inspired writers with which we have to do; it is not merely with some Biblical criticism; it is not with events of ancient history. The Living God is He with whom we have to do. His Word speaks to us in the events of the present time. In our sense of duty, in our opportunities to render service for His cause, in a thousand ways, God speaks directly to our spirits. And the admonition of this writer has as much force for us as for any generation who have lived: To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

(January 5, 1913.)

XV.

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."—Revelation 3 : 20.

Jesus never tried to awaken faith in God by means of arguments to prove His existence. There was no need of it. We ourselves are evidence to ourselves. It is difficult to escape the conviction. A million suns, glowing in the stellar spaces, evince the fact that there is a power adequate to uphold and guide a million suns. Jesus did not come to argue to the world about the existence of God. He came to reveal the heart of God,—God's mind towards the children of men,—His inmost nature. The world knew that there was a God of power, and wisdom, and skill. But the heart of God, His mind and will, it did not know. The Son of God has revealed it in His human life, and emphasized it by His death upon the cross. If the power

and beauty and skill in the material universe have an adequate cause, then, too, that moral beauty and moral worth, that we behold in Jesus Christ, have an adequate cause.

The greatest thing in the universe, of which man has direct knowledge, the object of highest worth, of most transcendent beauty, is the character of Jesus Christ. What is the beauty and worth of a million suns as compared with this,—the beauty and worth of the character of Jesus Christ?

Now Jesus Christ reveals us to ourselves. He makes known the rightful nature of man by making known our relations to God. From one point of view we may truly say: God is the unknowable. He transcends our knowledge. But from another point of view we may say, There is none other whom we may know as well. For a knowledge of God is involved in the knowledge of our own selves. He is the presupposition of our thought, of our consciousness. For our consciousness is of a self who has rights, duties, obligations. But rights, duties, obligations, imply relationship to a personal God,—not a distant being, who needs to be searched for and have his existence proved by arguments. God does not need to be brought to light,—for He Himself is light. He is the life of our life. We have not far to go to find God. If we do not perceive Him where He is present, we shall not find Him in objects remote.

If God were only a creature, a created thing among other objects of the universe, then He might be far

off and need to be discovered by searching. But since it is God who made us, and in whom we live, it is not evidence of His existence that we need, but perception of His presence.

God made us for the express purpose of revealing Himself to us, and of revealing His inmost nature, His love, and His goodness, by means of us. He made us that His own unselfish love might be manifested to others through us.

We speak of the "discoveries" of science. As mankind gain knowledge of the laws of nature, and the facts of the world of matter, we call these "*new* discoveries". These facts and principles, which are new to us, are older than the moon and stars, older than the human race. They have only been waiting to be discovered by men. This new knowledge of the outer world, the kingdom of nature, which is gradually being acquired, is in reality the man coming to his rightful place and environment in the outer creation. And as man's knowledge of the outer world, the kingdom of nature, has been a gradual acquirement, so, too, his knowledge of the spiritual world and its relationship,—the Kingdom of God within him.

We hear of a "new theology". The truth of God is as old as eternity, but new knowledge of truth is gained step by step, in the spiritual history of mankind. Abraham gained a "new theology" when he left the idolatries of his ancestral home, and obeyed the voice of God. The prophets brought a new theology to Israel,

when they proclaimed the spiritual nature of the true worship of God. Jesus brought a new theology, in His revelation of God's Fatherhood and man's sonship. A new theology comes to every age, as the spirit of Christ unfolds fuller knowledge of our sonship to God and our duties to one another as children of God.

The discoveries of science are the finding of the actual world without. To find Christ is to find the actual world in which our spirits are made to live and enjoy the completeness of life,—the Kingdom of God within. To find Christ is to find our relationship in the family of God. We have not far to go to find Christ. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock". Christ comes to each one of us to-day, bringing the Gospel of sonship, realizing to us the worth and dignity of our lives.

But this same revelation of God has another side. It is also a revelation of our oneness with God's family on earth, our fellow men. To find Christ is not to discover an individual salvation, that we can take and enjoy all by ourselves alone. It is to find ourselves as belonging to the family of God. To find Christ is to find our duties and obligations, and to serve our generation as He served His. To find Christ is to take up the burdens of others, in the spirit of loving self-sacrifice, as He did.

In opposition to Christ's call, the selfish instincts of our nature—the unloving impulses—incline us to seek the good of life in avoiding self-sacrifice. Could

we carry out to its normal result this disposition to avoid self-sacrifice—this impulse to seek that only which may minister to our self-gratification, and to do that only which selfishness prompts, what should we become? We should be nothing that we ourselves could respect. There is not a quality that gives any worth to human character, but is rooted in some form of self-sacrifice. Human nature at its best is the expression of some form of self-conquest. Patience, forgiveness, benevolence, moral courage, are all qualities that take us out of our self-seeking, compel us to sacrifice for the good of others.

The moral sense in the heart of man, is Christ at the door. This is that true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. That spirit of self-sacrificing love, expressed by the life of Jesus, and witnessed by His cross, has always spoken to the heart of man. Every human soul that has any sense of duty, or obligation, hears the voice of Christ. To open the door to Him who knocks, is to take Christ's spirit of unselfish love into our lives. It is to follow Him in His sacrifice, in His service of His fellow-men. To follow Christ, is to find life in losing life.

But if we should adopt His spirit of unselfish love, shall we not be losing something of the completeness of life? What would become of our comfort and ease, if we actually adopt His disposition to bear the burdens of others? Mankind in general have some sense of the worth and beauty of that spirit, whose highest expres-

sion was on the Cross of Calvary. But they fear to adopt it; it seems like losing life.

Should we then lose some dignity and greatness, if we actually took Christ's humility into our spirits? Could we in reality cast out of our souls all those vanities, all traces of covetousness, all that disposition to exalt ourselves unduly, should we then, in the eternal reality of things, be less or more? Should we take the transparent honesty and truthfulness of Jesus into our souls, should we become as regardless as He was of human approval, and seek the honor that cometh from God only, should we be losing life, or finding it? Should we be, in the reality of things, less or greater, poorer or richer?

Do we not know that he who has taken Christ's spirit into his life, His self-sacrificing love impelling to unselfish service, has found his true selfhood? He has found that true nobility for which God made us all. He has gained the fulness and wealth of life, which self-seeking always loses.

He who knows the deep satisfaction that comes from temptation conquered; he who knows the peace of the soul from which vanity, envy, false pride are cast out; he who knows the joy of self-sacrificing service;—he it is that knows the meaning of these words: "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

XVI.

HE WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD

"Jesus of Nazareth . . . He went about doing good . . . for God was with him."—Acts 10: 38.

This is the description of the life of Jesus given by the Apostle Peter. He wants to sum up in a sentence what his Master's life had been, and thus he expresses it: "He went about doing good." This is the image of the invisible God mirrored in the life of Jesus—for doing good is the very life of God. The highest thought of God that we can have is that He is perfect goodness.

And what is goodness? The very essence of goodness is good will. God's goodness is His will to promote the highest good of His creation. His holiness is His self-sacrificing love. God suffers that His will to do good may prevail.

It follows from what God is—from what His perfect goodness is—that the true worship of God consists in doing good. Real communion with God must con-

sist in sharing His will to do good. We must get rid of our self-absorption, and get into the spirit and life purpose of the Master who "went about doing good, for God was with Him."

Doing good was the occupation of His life. It was not that occasionally an opportunity occurred when good might be done, which He did not altogether neglect (though for the most part he labored to promote his private interests), but it was the controlling purpose of His life. Every day and all days His chief thought was to do good. He not only lived for it, but He was ready to die for it, when dying would serve that purpose better than living. In this way Jesus sets before us, in His life and example, what God's holiness is. God was with Him; God was in Him, revealing Himself to us in the life and example of His Son.

A different conception of the holiness of God, and the way in which He should be worshipped and served, has often prevailed among those who have thought to honor Him. Thus it was in ancient Israel. The idea was entertained that God would be honored and pleased to have many animals offered in sacrifice at the temple, and to have incense burned on the altar. The prophet Isaiah told the people that there was nothing in those animal sacrifices calculated to do anybody any good, and therefore God did not care for such worship. The prophet represents God as saying: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?" That is to say: "God is not a being to be honored by such a

ceremonial. It misrepresents the character of God. God's holiness is His will that good should be done." And the prophet goes on to tell what will honor God more than their temple ceremonies. It is: "Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow."

And there is that great saying of the prophet Micah: "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come with thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Time and again the prophets of Israel virtually declare that the value of religion, and its only value, is its ethical value. The worth of religion is to be estimated by its moral results.

When Jesus came centuries later to the people of Israel, He found still prevalent the same mistaken conception about the character of God, and what constitutes His holiness, against which the prophets had protested. The Pharisees of our Lord's day thought of God's holiness as something that separated Him from the world of human interests. We read in the Gospel (St. Luke, Chapter 15), that when the Publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him, "the Scribes and Pharisees murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." They thought He should hold Himself aloof from common people. But Jesus an-

swered their murmuring by those three parables that set forth the character of God, and how He is to be most honored. God's holiness is represented by the shepherd who leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and goes after the one that is lost, till he find it. God's goodness is pictured in the love of the Father who went out to meet the returning wanderer when he was yet a great way off.

And Jesus tells us in these parables what the joy of heaven is like. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The joy of heaven is ethical; it is joy because moral good has been accomplished. It is the joy of good done by sacrifice.

A very common thought about heaven is that it is a condition of freedom from care. Jesus does not speak of the future life of the righteous as a condition of inaction but rather of increased activity. He does indeed say: "Come unto Me, ye weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But this rest that Jesus would give us is not rest from activity; it is not rest from doing good. It is rest that comes from taking away the burden of covetousness which holds many back from doing the good they might. It is the rest that comes to the soul that is free from selfish pride,—rest that the spirit enjoys set free from all envy, bitterness, anger, or hate. The rest we need is to put away all those qualities that interfere with doing the good we might do.

The entrance to the heavenly state is described as the portion of a servant to whom the Master says: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." On the other hand, the condemnation of the unfaithful servant is expressed in such words as: "Take therefore the talent from him": "Bind him hand and foot": "Cast him into outer darkness." The laws of mind and body are such, that neglect to exercise our powers for doing good results in the loss of the power. These words of Christ apply as well to the rewards and penalties of life in this world as in that which is to come.

There could be no higher evidence of God's regard for us than that we have this high calling. It is possible for each one of us to make this the ruling purpose of our lives, the aim to which all other aims shall be subordinate, the purpose to do good. Nobody else can prevent it, if we will so to do. No conditions of wealth or poverty can prevent us, if we so will.

This, then, is the life of God,—His will and purpose to do good. And what does it mean for us that we are permitted to share the purpose and the same goodness that is His? Man is the only creature on earth to whom is given such high privilege as to choose and do the will of God. The angels of heaven can do nothing greater or higher than this.

In poetic verse we sing: "O all ye works of the Lord, Bless ye the Lord; Praise Him and magnify

Him forever!" Mountains and hills, seas and floods, beasts and cattle, all are called upon to praise the Lord; but the only creatures of this world who can voluntarily praise and magnify God are the children of men. Only man can make the supreme aim of his life, doing good. He alone can make the moral welfare of his fellow men the ruling purpose of his life, to which all other plans are subordinate. Herein is his greatness. In this is the stamp of man's sonship to God. In this, if he will, he can share the life of the Eternal. Herein is the highest, the most convincing evidence of man's immortality.

Opportunities for doing good are not only the highest honor that could be bestowed upon us, but also they are our highest privileges. They are our highest privileges, because it is chiefly through doing good that we are able to receive any good. Opportunities for doing good are our principal means of grace.

It is in vain that souls seek for forgiveness and peace and the consolations of religion as private benefits. Seeking for communion with God as a private blessing is a vain endeavor. We are so constituted that the only way we can know the goodness of God, is to receive some of God's goodness into our own characters.

The true worship of God is to do God's will. When we shut our neighbor, our fellow men, out of our sympathies, we shut out the spirit of Christ; we shut God out. There is no communion with God except through an unselfish will. We come to God through Christ,

that is, by means of a disposition in us that is like Christ's. The call to follow Christ is the call to make the supreme purpose of our lives the same as was the supreme purpose of His life. When we set ourselves unselfishly to do good, then we are, so far, like Christ, and God is with us. "He went about doing good, for God was with Him."

Our real communion with God must be in acts of unselfish love. There is no Holy Communion in efforts to get good, all for ourselves alone. The reality of Communion is in sharing God's unselfish love for the world, and expressing it in acts like those which Christ performed.

There are many ways of doing good. One may do a great deal of good, as unconsciously as he may do a great deal of harm. Our chief concern should be to choose and to do the will of God; which always means —to do right. We may not have opportunity to perform great and striking deeds; but we all have opportunity—every day, and every hour—to exercise humility, patience, sympathy, kindness, faith in God. The soul that does this is always a power for good, is always doing good.

In conclusion, we are reminded that there is no heaven of self-indulgence. Jesus Christ never held out to his followers the prospect of a future paradise of selfish delights. There is no haven of rest for weary souls who are tired of being called upon to undertake self-denying tasks in behalf of their fellow men. There

is no place of rest in the world beyond for covetous souls, where they may sit down with crowns on their heads, and not be asked for any more contributions or sacrifices for the welfare of others. There can be no heaven where will be no tax put upon our selfishness, or where we shall not be called upon to part with what is dear to us, for the sake of others.

The world needs, before all things, to be converted from that disposition of unregenerate human nature to seek a selfish paradise. It needs to be saved from the disposition to evade the tax which Christian love always imposes. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." We enter the Kingdom of Heaven, in so far as we share Christ's spirit of unselfish love.

Doubtless God's universe has other fields of loving sacrifice than those of this earth. But it may be well, that in all seriousness we ask ourselves whether heaven has anything to offer that we really desire. The joy of heaven! Do we really want it? For we can, if we will, to-day begin in some measure to share that joy which Christ says is "the joy in the presence of the angels of God", the joy that is in heaven; which is the joy of a life directed to the high purpose of doing good.

(June 23, 1912.)

XVII.

THE TRUE LIFE OF MAN

"And that which fell among the thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."—St. Luke 8: 14.

It is to be observed how often Jesus chooses, in His parables about the Kingdom of Heaven, objects that have life and growth. Thus we have the parable of the Mustard Seed, the Wheat and the Tares, the Leaven in the Meal. This text is from the parable of "The Sower and the Seed". The heart of man is the soil, wherein various principles struggle for ascendency. The truth, divine impulses, are the seed. The issue depends on what reception the soil gives to the good seed.

One cause of the failure of many lives is described in this parable as the seed which fell among thorns, or weeds. The weeds which choke the plant, Jesus says, are the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. These

often monopolize the soil, take possession of the heart of man, in a way that prevents the life from bringing any fruit to perfection. Such a life fails of fulfilling the real purpose of God in giving us life,—fails of living the eternal life here and now. It is a fruitless life.

It is a deplorable thing to be advancing in years, and yet to be making no advancement in that for which life is given. Life is for growth, for education. At every stage of life we have to part with something, but we ought to be, we may be, gaining that which is of higher worth than what we leave behind. Jesus says of those who are absorbed in cares, riches, and pleasures of this life, in a way that prevents their spiritual growth, that they are "choked". He does not say that their religion is choked, but that they themselves are choked.

Sometimes the matter is viewed as though religion were something superadded to the proper manhood. But when Jesus speaks of living, He means living the life of a child of God. The real self of the man is that higher self, that self of higher possibilities. Our real self must be that for which God made each one of us. Our own consciousness tells us that our real self is the self that conquers evil, and expresses righteousness. We depart from our true selves when we adopt low motives of action. This is our own self-consciousness of the matter. The person who is conscious of rejecting evil inclinations, and, in the face of difficulty, choosing and doing the right, experiences a deep satisfaction

of spirit. The deepest joy of which a human soul is capable is the joy of an approving conscience. It brings to the spirit a sense of triumph and strength and freedom, which nothing else can give. The man finds his proper selfhood in rejecting evil impulses, and choosing and doing that which his highest convictions approve.

And on the other hand, he who has the consciousness of having yielded to selfish impulses, adopting ignoble motives, may have found some pleasure in wrong doing, but the consciousness of having done wrong, the consciousness of having rejected the higher motive, and chosen the lower, is not a sense of freedom or triumph, but of defeat. It is the feeling that our proper selfhood has been overmastered.

The common language of the world proves that this is the universal sense of mankind. When one obeys the impulse of anger, it is said that "his temper has got the best of him". The feeling is that his proper self is in a measure subordinated, overcome. This is the common sense of the world. Of an intemperate man it is not said that he has power, but that he has a weakness. His will, that is himself, is weak. And so in the language of mankind the world over is expressed the consciousness that the proper selfhood is in the life of righteousness. Yielding to selfish impulses is the surrender of the real self. We designate it by the word *yielding*. We do not call it *overcoming* or *conquering*, when a person rejects his best impulses, and follows the baser ones. But in the overcoming of

selfish motives, base impulses, the man knows himself to have gained the victory.

We never feel ourselves enslaved to good impulses. It is in following low motives that the spirit has the sense of slavery, but in doing right there is the sense of freedom, elevation, dominion. In this consciousness as conquering in righteousness, and as being conquered if we adopt evil motives, we meet a reality very deep and significant. We identify ourselves with that part of our nature that is most like God. God has so constituted our spirits, that unselfish love is our true life. We are not called upon to *lose* ourselves in God, but to *find* ourselves in Him.

We do not lose our freedom in taking Christ's yoke, but we find our freedom in it. "His service is perfect freedom". It is a glorious thing to be a distinct personality in God's universe, a self conscious of power to choose the highest motives of action. It is glorious beyond imagination to be using our power according to the will of God. This self-consciousness that tells us that it is our true self that conquers when we take Christ's yoke, and that our self is enslaved, when we reject Christ's spirit, this is the word of God to us.

At first thought, and looking merely at the surface of things, it might seem as though we were made to find our life in seeking conditions of material comfort. There is some happiness to be found in a life of display, in gaining wealth, in education of the intellect, in the refinements of life, in reading, travelling, visiting, in

dressing well, in artistic surroundings, in luxury, in admiring and being admired.

Of course all civilized beings know that we are not constituted to find the good of life in grossness and vice. That must be rejected. But the ideal of a refined life, one from which all grossness is banished, but yet a life in which there is no strait gate, no narrow way, a life in which there is no mortal struggle between the serpent and the Son of God, a life undisturbed by any echo of that voice which cries: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and follow Me",—is not that a very good ideal of what might be called a "successful life"? Is not that about the kind of life for which we are constituted, and wherein we may find the greatest happiness? To be sure, a little religion added would seem to give completeness to the picture. Not, indeed, to be over-religious; not to have our religion too conspicuous, or stand in the way of self-pleasing. According to this view, the ideal life does not consist in exemplifying the Beatitudes of Jesus. It is a life of decorous self-indulgence.

But in direct contrast to this life of refined self-seeking is the life of Jesus. Can it be that such a life as His is the true life for us, in this age of the world? Everyone agrees that His was a beautiful life, a noble life. Can it be that we may find the highest good of existence in such a life? Confidence in following Christ is the Christian faith. The Christian faith is not some words that we term "our Creed", but the confidence of

finding our highest good in aims and purposes like those of Jesus.

We observe that these things that Jesus says may destroy life,—the cares, the riches, the pleasures,—are innocent things in themselves. They are even necessary to civilization. Every healthy, useful life must have cares. Cares are part of the necessary discipline of life. It is desirable that a man should have work to do. It is, in general, well that a person be considerably absorbed in his work or occupation. But many become slaves of care, instead of making care subservient to their higher life.

It is part of a complete life to exercise the stewardship of possessions. Man is constituted for ownership. The idea of abolishing private ownership contradicts a deep instinct of human nature. Comparatively few are rich in the sense of owning large material possessions, but, in reality, whatever gives power constitutes our wealth. Our possessions may be the power that education confers, or skill, or business capacity; gifts of mind and heart, the power to influence.

Our trial consists in our obligation to use what we have unselfishly, to use our possessions for the highest aims. We are tempted to use them for the gratification of our vanity, to gratify our love of ease and pleasure, or to get rid of the obligation that supreme love to God and love to our neighbor puts upon us. The test is,—do we use our powers and possessions as Jesus used His?

The Kingdom of Heaven is not won by getting rid

of possessions, but by the conscientious use of them. St. Paul says: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, . . . and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

The pleasures of life, also, have their uses. Rightly employed, they may minister to the spiritual nature. But to seek pleasure for its own sake is to degrade ourselves. The call of Christ does not set before us the alternative of choosing between the cares and riches and pleasures, on the one hand, and freedom from them all, on the other. The alternative lies between the spiritual life and the unspiritual. The struggle is within the soul; there is no escape. It meets us all.

The decisive question is: What do we set before us as the chief aim of life? What do we seek as our chief good? Are we to-day in our real selfhood superior to the influences which tend to make life sordid and unspiritual? Do the cares, and riches, and pleasures of life serve our spiritual nature, or do they enslave it?

Finally let us consider; nothing in the world has any importance or value in itself except manhood, our divine sonship. This is the only interest in our lives that has value in and for its own sake. Is the world's business of any importance? It has no value except so far as it ministers to the growth of a true manhood. That is the purpose of God in creating this world and placing man upon it. The final aim of all is that the true life of man, the life of the spirit, may be expressed.

Worldliness is founded upon a delusion about the

reality of things and their true values. There can be no ultimate success except by adopting Christ's estimate of values, and conforming our lives to it.

(January 26, 1913.)

EXTRACTS FROM SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

XVIII.

STRUGGLE AND VICTORY

The life of man on earth is a struggle. It is not only a struggle with his outward conditions, a struggle for existence, but the principal battle ground is within his own spirit. His higher aspirations and desires are at war with his lower impulses.

The first picture of human life, given in the Book of Genesis, portrays a temptation, a struggle, and a defeat. The Gospel narrative begins with the account of a temptation, a struggle, and a victory.

The mere animal has no ideals. The struggle of the animal is only the struggle for existence. It is only a struggle with outward conditions. With man, the great struggle is not without, but within his own spirit. It is the struggle—not for temporal life; it is a struggle for immortal life.

The measure of manhood is the measure of resistance to lower motives. The spiritual freedom, which is the glory of the human spirit, is the power of freely choosing what class of motives shall control our actions.

Every human soul must on the ground of his own spirit either conquer or be conquered. There is no exception. We cannot escape struggle and conflict. But we can rise above fear, we can escape defeat, by having God for our shield.

We sometimes speak of Nature as our "friend", our "kind Mother". But what is nature? Nature is the name we give to that world of impersonal forces in which our lives unfold. It is the realm of fixed, changeless law. It comprises everything we know, but spirit. Nature is impersonal. She cannot therefore be properly called either our friend or our enemy. Nature is our opportunity. Nature furnishes the necessary field for discipline and development of human spirits. But to gain her best help demands a struggle.

Nature has a firm hold on all her possessions, and she was never known to permit a single atom of her possessions to escape from her power. She destroys every life she creates. The myriads of myriads of living beings that inhabited this fair earth in former ages are perished every one. The same nature that produced them has crushed them.

So far as we belong to that impersonal world of matter and material law, which is commonly designated Nature, we are doomed. One of the chief wants of our being is the assurance that we do not belong entirely to Nature. By our spiritual powers we may rise to a life that is not under the dominion of Nature. In our true selfhood, we belong to God. We rightly belong to

the spiritual realm. God says, "Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Although we are involved in the dissolving elements of a world that is passing away; yet we have the assurance that we do not belong to this perishable frame. We do not really belong to death. In our spiritual nature we belong to God. Our spiritual being constitutes us "God's children", and therefore sharers of His own Immortal Life.

We need protection from the inevitable disappointments and miseries of life. We need protection from our own selves. There is a very general disposition of human minds to live and move in a little circle of interests of which self is the center. The natural effect of this morbid self-consciousness is to isolate the being. We dwell in a world of petty interests. Our self-seeking hearts are our most persistent foes. But we were made for a larger life than this. The only defence from this morbid self-consciousness is in our relations to God. He is our shield. In our relations to Him, we rise to a higher life, and live for nobler purposes.

Let us not imagine that we can find happiness or success in life by escaping struggle, responsibilities, difficult duties. It is not by throwing off care that happiness and freedom can be gained. The only escape from that destruction decreed for all that belongs to the realm of natural law, is escape into that life controlled by the Law of the Spirit.

The heart that conquers its own selfishness is no

longer the slave of outward conditions. We escape from the life dominated by mere self-seeking impulses into that life of the spirit ruled by self-sacrificing love. All things become the possession of him whose life is conditioned by the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven. St. Paul says to such: "All things are yours, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come: all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

XIX.

DOING THE WILL OF GOD

(From a sermon on the text, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."—St. John 7: 17.)

The mistake has often been made of thinking that Christian truth was a kind of philosophy. But one may be a profound student of philosophy, and utterly ignorant of essential Christian truth. The essential truth of the Gospel is moral truth, and can be known only in the experiences of moral life. The sensual, the selfish, the proud, the covetous, cannot know it. It does not come into the range of their experiences. They only can know Christian truth who follow Christ and share in the experiences of His life.

One may have vast knowledge of the sciences, and fail utterly to understand the words of Christ, "He that saveth his life, shall lose it; he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." The humblest soul in the community may know this truth by the experience of sacrifice made for the sake of principle. Thus only can it be known.

Who knows the truth of Christ's words: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and speak evil against you for my sake?" Not they who are careful to keep on the safe side, and to go with the majority.

But he who is ready to sacrifice popularity in order to follow truth wherever it leads, through evil report or through good report, he knows the truth of these words. He alone knows it. He knows it by sharing the experience of Christ's life.

Who knows that "Blessed are the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart"? This knowledge is not attained by the study of philosophy, or the investigations of science. But he only who lives the life. All essential Christian truth can be known only through the experience of a life in moral harmony with Christ.

One important conclusion from these considerations is that God has put all mankind more nearly on a common vantage ground as regards the prize of life than we are sometimes accustomed to imagine. For what is the real prize of life? Though the multitude feel as though the prize of life was to be sought in outward conditions, in wealth or distinction or some kind of earthly good fortune, yet we know that the real prize of life is to possess the Kingdom of Heaven.

The unlearned man may have clearer moral insight than the philosopher,—or it may be the reverse. The man of small means may be really more liberal than the rich, or the reverse may be true. The possession of

moral capacity is to a great degree independent of outward circumstances, whether of social position, or wealth, or learning. Christ's Gospel appeals to that quality in which all men stand most nearly on a level. The world passeth away and the desire thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

(November 11, 1906.)

XX.

SEEKING HAPPINESS

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."—St. Matthew 6: 24.

(The conclusion only is here given.)

We cannot have both kinds of happiness, the happiness of selfish gratification, and the happiness of a child of God. The joys of luxury and display are not "the rewards of piety". That which we seek for its own sake, that to which we look as having in itself power to give us comfort and contentment, that is our God; that is for us in the place of God. When we are seeking material things as though they had power in themselves to make us blessed, they become our mammon. We are serving idols.

One is a slave who serves a master who has no right to command him. Whether we are slaves or free depends on what is the leading purpose of life with us. What do we seek as the good of life? The human soul goes out of its proper sphere and vocation in seeking

happiness in a merely material good,—when it makes happiness the aim of life and effort. When we take upon ourselves the care for our own happiness, we become slaves.

God has indeed created us for care-taking and industry. Our freedom is not in shirking care, but in taking that care which belongs to us. That is the care of seeking first the Kingdom of God. A creature is free that enjoys unfettered use of his highest faculties. Freedom is self-conquest. In taking thought for the Kingdom of God is freedom, because this calls into exercise our highest faculties. In this seeking we express our true natures as children of God. To seek first the Kingdom and righteousness of God, is to make duty to God our first care and our duty to our fellow men for His sake.

Jesus does not bid us take anxious thought for the to-morrow of this day, nor yet for the to-morrow of this life. He would not have us anxious about the hereafter. We need take no anxious thought about happiness in this world or the world to come, if we are only taking thought for duty. Let our anxious care-taking be concerned with our duty to God to-day.

And as the flowers of the field are clothed with a beauty for which they have not toiled nor spun, but which has come to them in the fulfillment of their nature, so to the soul of man, in the expression of his true nature as a child of God, there will come the perfection of life, and the full satisfaction of his thirst for freedom and beauty and joy.

XXI.

SACRIFICE THE MEASURE OF LOVE

From the Sermon on the text, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."—St. John 14: 15.

The important question for each one of us is: Are we doing the will of God? Though our religious emotions may not be what they ought to be, yet we need not be altogether disheartened on that account. Sacrifice is the measure of love. What we are ready to sacrifice in behalf of the object of our love is the measure and test of love. Self-denial for the sake of those whom we love becomes easy and pleasant.

The evidence of love to God is that we are doing the will of God. Obedience is the test of discipleship. We are continually praying: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Do we mean it? And by whom do we desire that God's will shall be done? If we are sincere and in earnest when we offer this prayer, then it is by ourselves, who offer the prayer, that we would have God's will done. The prayer is not the mere expres-

sion of a desire that others should do God's will, while we are chiefly concerned to get our wills accomplished. If the petition, Thy will be done, has any meaning, it signifies our purpose and desire to do the will of God.

If we offer this petition in the spirit of Him who gave us the prayer, it does not mean mere resignation to what cannot be avoided, submission to the inevitable. It means that with love and confidence in the perfect goodness of our Father in Heaven, we offer ourselves to be the doers of God's will. The only sufficient test of our conformity to the first and great commandment, Thou shalt love God, is the test that Jesus gives us,—the test of obedience. "If ye love me keep my commandments."

(April 6, 1913.)

XXII.

THE RIGHT USE OF CREEDS

No words can adequately express Eternal Reality. The notion of an "infallible book" or an "infallible creed" is about as unreasoning as that of the barbarian who thinks he may put the likeness of God into a graven image. The material will not hold it. Human art cannot mould the God of Eternal Reality and Truth into sentences and periods, any more than by the sculptor's cunning it can mould God into images of brass and stone.

What saves our Christian creeds from being idolatrous is the recognition that their interpretation is not fixed and final. To say that "fixedness of interpretation is of the essence of the Creeds" is to class them with the idolater's image. God inspires His faithful servants, but it is their spirits that He inspires. They have still to do their work with human hands and earthly material. It is not possible for human art, with imperfect material, to produce a perfect fabric. Sacred books

and statements of doctrine, though the authors be inspired, cannot express absolute perfection. Any rational thought of what God is must overleap all forms of finite utterance.

XXIII.

A WELCOME

SPOKEN ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY 27, 1905, AT A PUBLIC GATHERING OF THE EPIPHANY CLUB

I am glad to welcome to this church and to this gathering of the Epiphany Club these friends, clerical and laymen, from other parishes. I thank you for coming here to-night, and for any words of exhortation or encouragement.

BOYS' CLUB

I believe it is about two years ago that our first gathering of this sort was held by the club. The club was not very old then, and the active members were not very old; though very active. They are not very old now (except the rector and a few honorary members).

We called it the "Epiphany Boys' Club". Well, it is the Epiphany Boys' Club now. But I seem to recognize a great deal more manhood in the club now. There has been growth. There has been growth from

boys to men. And not only has there been growth in stature, there has been growth in the qualities that constitute manhood.

Manhood

Nothing better could be said of you, than what I feel able to say, namely, that you have grown in true manhood. The end and object of all our doings should be to foster manhood. To build up manhood and womanhood is the true reason why we have a Church. It is the only right aim of Christianity. The degree in which this is being accomplished is the measure of the value of religion and of the Church and of all things connected therewith.

Coleridge and Southey

When I speak to the young men of this club, it seems as though you must be reminded of the story of Coleridge and Southey. At the beginning of his career, Coleridge had been for a few years a Unitarian preacher. He laid aside this work, and spent most of his life in talking philosophy to his few special friends, one of whom was the poet Southey. One day Coleridge asked Southey: "Did you ever hear me preach?" Southey's reply was: "I never heard you do anything else." That might very literally be said by the members of this club to me.

Church Attendance

It is one great cause of my high appreciation of the members of this club, that the most of them do submit

to "suffer the word of exhortation" from me, nearly every Sunday. High merit is to be accorded them. They come to church nearly every Sunday evening. In these days, we of the clergy have a high appreciation of men who come regularly to church. The very presence of these men in church is a help highly appreciated.

Helpers in the Parish

The members of this club deserve our gratitude for their readiness to take responsibility in various branches of Church work, as teachers and officers in the Sunday school, as ushers at services, and in other ways.

Young Men

It is impossible that your rector should not feel a deep interest in you, and a warm sympathy for you as being young men. The older a man grows, the stronger are his sympathies for young men. That is my experience. There is a strong temptation to avail oneself of every opportunity to preach to them. It seems as though we might impart some of the valuable results of our experience.

But I will forego the temptation to preach to you now. It would be hardly just. You are so good as to give me other opportunities to preach. I will therefore content myself with merely congratulating you as being young at this interesting period of the world's history. It is worth more to be living now, for one who truly lives, than at any former period in

the world's history. For one who by intelligent sympathy enters into the best life of the world, large opportunities for true life are offered now.

WORDSWORTH'S EXPERIENCE

The poet Wordsworth lived through the last quarter of the eighteen century and the first half of the nineteenth (from 1770-1850). He was a young man during the stirring events of the French Revolution. The French Revolution was the outbreak of a people who had been oppressed for centuries. In some respects it resembles what is now taking place in Russia. Wordsworth was one whose interest in the welfare of mankind led him to cherish high hopes of the great good that would come out of the Revolution. It proved a disappointment in some respects, but for a time he regarded the course of events as very promising. In one of his later poems, he reviews this portion of his life. He says of it:—

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."

Much more can we say of the outlook of you young men of the present period of the world's history.

> "Bliss is it in this dawn to be alive,
> But to be young is very heaven."

YOUR FUTURE

If one's life is only selfish and self-seeking, then it does not matter whether he lived before the flood

or in the Dark Ages; but for those who with intelligent sympathy enter into these highest interests of mankind, to be living to-day, young and active, is a great opportunity. Some of you, we may hope, with lives of as many years as Wordsworth's, will be living and working fifty or sixty years hence. What one greater than Wordsworth said to the men of His time whose lives were devoted to the high interests of mankind, may truly be said to men of to-day, old and young,— "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see."

EXTRACTS FROM ESSAYS

XXIV.

EXTRACTS FROM AN ESSAY ON

EVIDENCES OF IMMORTALITY FROM PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

Read Before the Alpha Chi Club

(This essay of about 7,000 words includes criticism of the writings of Hudson, Shaler, McConnell, Savage, Fiske, William James, and the reports of the Society for Psychical Research.)

Only a small number of the most fundamental and important beliefs of men are held in consequence of the reasons by which they are nominally supported. The Christian faith in immortality has doubtless a better foundation than the one most commonly assigned to it. The knowledge of God as revealed in the person and work of Christ probably has more to do with our confidence in man's destiny than the mere story of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. (p. 8.)

Those who refer the phenomena of what are called spiritualistic manifestations to the agency of spirits from another world, claim that this explanation has su-

perior merit on account of its simplicity. To this claim the answer is made, that it is extremely simple to introduce the miraculous and supernatural to account for anything. To account for thunder as being the voice of an angry God is a very simple explanation. It is not however scientific to introduce the supernatural to explain anything for which natural causes may be assigned. Mr. Hudson makes a commendable effort to explain the psychic phenomena in a scientific way.

He advances the hypothesis that man has two minds which he terms the objective and the subjective minds. . . . According to Mr. Hudson's theory this life beyond the grave will evidently be a life wherein there will be no further need of brains, and the study of inductive science will be outgrown. . . Mr. Hudson's hypothesis of the dual mind is not—I believe—accepted by professional psychologists generally. Yet it would appear that an essential part of it is accepted; enough of it is held to give cogency to his argument. (p. 30.)

If, however, a scientific demonstration of a future life were made by such methods as those employed by Mr. Hudson or Mr. Savage, it would amount to scarcely more than an interesting biological fact. It would, indeed, enlarge a little our knowledge of the nature of man, but it would not deepen it much. Such knowledge would be of the same order as that gained by the demonstration that the caterpillar and the beetle have another stage of existence before them. According to the evidence which Spiritualism has to offer, it would

seem to be of a less inspiring nature than that. For the caterpillar might look forward to an evolution into a higher life than that of a poor worm. But according to the evidence to be drawn from the phenomena of Spiritualism, man's outlook for the hereafter is dreary. It certainly affords no hope of any speedy development into anything much higher or better than present conditions. Mr. Savage says that the communications received from the spirit world average in the quality of their thought about like his daily mail, and adds that "souls there are just as big fools as they are here." Prof. Shaler, observing the imbecility evinced in these psychic communications, declares that annihilation were better than such a fate. (p. 41.)

It is not within the province of psychology, regarded as one of the natural sciences, to furnish us with knowledge of man as an immortal being. This is not to undervalue the science of psychology. It does doubtless, and it will still more, contribute to the verification of the highest knowledge we can have. It is not possible, however, that we could ever attain to this highest knowledge of man's nature merely by studying him as the natural scientist studies his specimen. Our real apprehension of the nature of man is involved in our knowledge of God and of the Kingdom of God. This knowledge is not first gained by a process of induction from psychic phenomena, neither is it conveyed to us by any form of scientific proof. Scientific evidence is, to be sure, of very great value in verifying our high-

est intuitions, and bringing them into practical relations with our life in this world.

Those lines of investigation which have brought to light man's place in the material creation, which show him to contain, in his personal being, the gain that has come from the work of the universe; these, as well as the study of psychology, are of great use in strengthening our convictions of the highest truth, and helping us to the right appreciation of that truth.

The knowledge of our immortality would not appear to be an induction from psychic or other phenomena, but a deduction from our apprehension of God. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Here would seem to be the principal ground of man's belief in a future life. Here is probably the real ground of the Christian confidence in immortality, rather than the evidence derived from the bodily resurrection of Jesus, or any other historic testimony. Our conviction is bound up with our knowledge of God. (p. 46.)

The conclusions as to the nature of man, which are derived from that class of phenomena which so-called Spiritualism professes to offer, are conclusions that have no moral character. If so-called Spiritualism has any knowledge of a future life for man, it is based on induction from facts of sensible manifestations. Herod could accept its conclusions as readily as St. John. A knowledge founded on such evidence could never arrive at the highest apprehension of the true nature of man. The same may be said of all attempts

to base the Christian faith on miracles. Any line of evidence that would overpower the senses and force conviction upon us, whether we will or no, can never conduct us to the highest knowledge. The highest truth must stand on its own foundation. It rests on the confidence that there is a God, and a moral order, just as natural science rests on the postulate that there is a universe of material law and order. There can be no absolute demonstration of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, except to the moral sense, the spiritual perceptions. This knowledge is not the conclusion of any process of scientific induction based on material or psychic phenomena. . . It must at last depend on the moral character and the will of the one who attains it. It is a personal conviction, a judgment of worth. It cannot be received by merely accepting a description, or believing a dogma, or as the outcome of a scientific process. It must be known as an appreciation. . . . Immortality is involved in the presuppositions which alone give reasonableness to the universe.

That the universe has meaning, that anything has worth, cannot be more certain than the presupposition that God is good. If God is good, then human life is good, and what we call "death" is good, for it is involved in the gift of life. In that mortal life which God has given us, is contained the very process of dissolution. It is a good gift, dissolution and all. If God bestowed a blessing, when He raised

man from the dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, then it follows that He bestowed a blessing on the human race, when He decreed that death that waits on our mortal life. And as firm as our real conviction of the goodness of God must be our conviction that man's true destiny is in a life beyond death. (p. 59.)

But would it on the whole be useful for us could we have positive demonstration of a future life? . . . We can conceive the possibility of evidence that would force upon us the conviction of a future life as an absolute certainty. It cannot be denied that a conviction of this sort would be in some ways advantageous. It would give a *kind* of security of life beyond, that many would be glad to have. But it is possible that a conviction of this sort, forced upon us in this way, might be a great hindrance to our attaining that higher knowledge of God and immortal life. The consideration of chief importance is not merely that we have a belief in God, but rather what kind of God we believe in; not merely that we believe that there is a future life, but what kind of life. It is of first importance to apprehend the eternal element of present life. . . .

No belief in God and the kingdom of God is a right belief till we receive it through our moral perceptions, our spiritual intuitions, or sense of spiritual values. It is an important part of a pupil's education that he learn to solve problems. We recognize that it is not always best that the scholar should be furnished beforehand

with the answer to every hard question. "Let him work it out for himself." The problem is not really solved for him, till he does solve it by the use of his own faculties, and by the exercise of that class of faculties adapted to the problem. . . . The highest truth we can possibly attain, the highest problem given us to solve, involves the knowledge of what sort of being man is.

No satisfactory solution of this problem can be reached by a method that depends more on the nervous temperament of a medium, or on the intellectual acumen of a student of psychology, than on the spiritual intuition of a believer in God. And it would seem highly probable that our best interests are served—and will continue to be served—by the fact that neither Spiritualism nor psychic science gives any answer to the question about a future life, that is not, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, "shadowed with doubt". . .

The benefits that come and will come from scientific knowledge can hardly be overestimated; they may be wrongly estimated. But we must conclude that the very highest knowledge that is possible for mankind to acquire is a kind of knowledge that may be "hidden from the wise and prudent", and yet "revealed unto babes". (p. 68.) (1902.)

XXV.

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

(From the conclusion of the essay reviewing Harnack's volume, much abridged.)

The question is,—Is Christianity presented in its integrity when Christology, in the technical sense, is left out? The fundamental assumption of these lectures, that Christianity in its inmost nature is life rather than theory, will not, it may be presumed, be generally disputed. In the parables Jesus very often represents the Gospel under some figure of life and growth. It is like leaven, like seed; its processes are like those which lead to the harvest. Indeed, the life principle seems to be with Him more than an illustration. He would seem to teach that its most central principle is a living force. Because it is life, it grows; and because it grows, it outgrows. From the nature of the case it is historic, revealing itself in history. Because it is a life force, it has adaptability to varying conditions, and expresses itself under various forms.

Like life in general, it appropriates to its use many elements that are not of its essence; they serve it for a time, and then are put aside, or remain as excrescences. Says Harnack: "The most inward of our possessions, viz., Religion, does not struggle up into life, free and isolated; it grows, so to speak, in coverings of bark, and cannot grow without them." The form in which truth is in one age apprehended may become obsolete. The thoughts of men grow larger and deeper and outgrow the form, so that what was once relatively true becomes superstition.

Thus Jesus presented His message in the forms of thinking that belonged to His day. Thus only could it be understood and received. He was continually trying to enlarge men's conceptions of truth, so that ultimately they might outgrow the particular forms in which He gave them. As Harnack says: "He left out no traditional element in which was a spark of moral force, accepted none which encouraged the selfish expectation of the nation."

Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, but gave a new meaning to the term. Indeed, He made that conception of Himself obsolete by going beyond it. He made great use of current conceptions of the Kingdom of God. The eschatology of His age was made to serve the Gospel message; so, too, He appropriated the demonology of that period.

Jesus did not attempt the impossible task of setting the world right, at once, in all matters of science and

philosophy, but He used as best He could the thought of the age, to impress the central and essential truth of the Gospel, the moral character of God, and the consequent worth of the human soul. In the following centuries, the Christian conviction of the great truth that the world is God's world took its form in modes of thought about the Kingdom of God, and about the second coming of Christ, that are now becoming obsolete.

Christianity has appropriately and effectively used the forms of thinking peculiar to each age. One sign of its vitality is that it cannot be shut up in rigid forms, but adapts various modes of expression.

1. In determining the question as to the sufficiency of the account of essential Christianity here given, we need to remember the character of the audience addressed,—men who recognize only the scientific method of investigation. It is addressed to thoughtful minds whose point of view is very different from that of some former generations. From what the past history of Christianity shows as to its nature, we may be confident that it has a message for the men of the twentieth century. But this is an age that sets limits to the possibilities of human knowledge. May it not then be frankly admitted that all that is essential to Christianity may be given in a practical knowledge of our relation to God and God's relation to us? Must we continue to insist that, to be a genuine Christian, a man must have certain knowledge of the inner relations of the several persons of the Godhead to one another? May not the

principles of judgment, commonly recognized as scientific, be applied to religion? And need we shrink from their thorough application?

2. The fact that Christ preached the Gospel without any technical theology gives support to this view. By persistence in presenting religion in some obsolete mode of thought we set up unnecessary barriers between the souls of men and God. Human selfishness will always present moral obstacles to the call of Christ, but we should seek to take away every intellectual barrier that is not necessary to the integrity of the Gospel.

3. And again, experience and observation appear to evince that the essential thing is not in what particular manner we conceive the persons of the Trinity to be related to one another; it is rather the moral character of God to whom we pay supreme worship. It may be questioned whether the real schismatics are not those who put a formal correctness of belief above the realities of life and character, who refuse to recognize the essential Christianity of some whose lives are evidently inspired by purposes like those of the life of Jesus, though not able to follow to the same conclusion with ourselves some process of reasoning about the nature of the Trinity. The exalting of Christological doctrines as belonging to the essentials of Christianity sometimes results in the apparent reversal of Christ's teaching, that not every one who says "Lord, Lord," but he that doeth the will of the Father, enters His Kingdom.

4. It is further evident that it is not the psychical theories we hold that determine the influence of our human friends upon us. Most men are influenced for good or ill by giving themselves to be acted upon by the personalities they meet, without consciously holding any definite opinions concerning psychology. Says Phillips Brooks:

> "Jesus preached Himself, not in the secondary modern sense of giving definitions of His nature and theories of His history. He set Himself before men, and bade them feel the power that came out from Him to all that were receptive with that personal receptiveness that He called faith. What is the difference between our Christianity and that of Christ's disciples? It is doctrines . . . doctrines made the test to that degree that it seems almost certain that the Apostles of Jesus, for all we know of them in the Gospels, could only dubiously and by a stretch of charity be admitted to be members of an evangelical Church in America to-day."

If we are to believe that Christianity in its essential elements was expressed in the life and teaching of Jesus, we can see it as standing in contrast with a prevalent error of that day. Against the mistake that righteousness consists in deeds of the law, He everywhere emphasized the truth that righteousness is not in doing but in being. It is not to be forgotten that Jesus urged the importance of belief. He also said much about doing; but the doing which He demands

is doing the will of God, and the believing was quite other than believing definitions of His nature.

5. And this leads us to the further consideration that technical Christology has no necessary ethical value, any more than a proposition in geometry. Some years ago it was thought that the interests of evangelical theology would be served by the circulation of a tract setting forth the fact that the great Napoleon had declared his belief that Jesus was God. He had said that he knew men, but Jesus was not a man. Of this class of testimony, there was already a superabundance. The demons which went into the herd of swine are supposed to have borne similar witness, and Satan himself has always been classed among the most orthodox of believers. If the testimony of Napoleon and the demons to the Godhead of Jesus demonstrates anything, it is that the opinion has no necessary ethical force. It would favor the conclusion that it does not belong to the things essential.

Such dogmas as are the definition of Christian experience, and therefore may be translated by the Spirit into Christian character, would appear to have intrinsic ethical value. We must believe that the essential Gospel is that word of God that has its correspondence in human experience. Faith is a moral act, and deals with moral truth.

6. And further, it may be seen that the actual holding the doctrines commonly called "Christology" as among the essentials of Christian truth is to set up

two classes of Christians in the Protestant as in the Roman Catholic Church. We have those who understand these doctrines, and those who depend on others understanding them. The latter class are many hundredfold the more numerous. Jesus thanks the Father that His Gospel is revealed unto babes. The transcendent worth of Christ, His moral authority, that He is rightful Lord of our spirits, is revealed to unsophisticated minds. But abstruse philosophical dogmas of Christology, based on assumed premises concerning the nature of the absolute, cannot in that form be revealed unto babes.

And finally, there seems to be no other department of things in which the Christian world is so nearly at agreement as concerning the worth of Christ's character, the moral beauty of His life as a reflection of the mind of the Father, and our obligation to be as He was. It is in the field of spiritual perception and Christian experience that is to be found the nearest approach to a common consensus of the Christian world. It is in the realm of theories that the widest differences are found. The tendency to exalt the ethical and the spiritual above that which is only theological is to be welcomed as working for unity.

It is not possible for all men everywhere to think alike about religion, and it is not desirable. Doctrines must needs differ, and modes of expression, but we ought to recognize the unity that is more real than any formal unity. Theories about Christ and about His

nature must always differ, but where a Christian God is worshipped, and His Spirit manifested in life, there must be the essence of Christianity.

(This essay was read before the Alpha Chi Club, November 12, 1903.)

XXVI.

FROM THE ESSAY ENTITLED

"THE TRUTH OF FAITH AND ARTICLES OF FAITH".

(This essay of about seven thousand words reviews admirably Kaftan's *The Truth of the Christian Religion* and Hermann's *Communion of the Christian with God*, with reference also to the views of Ritschl, Harnack, Hatch, Royce, etc.)

It is evident that the most effective Christian teachers are those who are rich in the contents of their direct faith in the Living God, and at the same time have the ability to present vividly to other men the idea of what their faith grasps. Those who can only set forth the contents of their intellects, are far less effective.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century, according to Kaftan, was essentially a return to the Christian conception of faith. Faith was recognized as being the soul's acceptance of truth; that truth which addresses primarily the moral sense. The Reformation came very near to clearing up the radical distinction between faith and belief. It did not, however, quite succeed.

The fulness of time was not come, and the Reformers settled back upon the old lines. The religious convictions of that age were hardened into some more dogmas, similar in character to the old ones, and were tacked on to them.

Now, it is thought, the time has come for a consistent and thorough application of the principles of the Reformation. If we are to come to an understanding with the best thought and learning of to-day, we must represent Christianity more as Christ Himself taught it. We must make it the Truth of the Christian Faith, and not, as it is to a great degree, set forth in traditional dogmas, some information about the objects of our faith. (p. 26.)

Our knowledge serves its purpose in a world of time and space. It no doubt has an element of reality in it, or else mankind would long ago have perished from the earth. But the highest knowledge does not lie in the direction towards which the intellectual faculties reach out. The highest knowledge is given in the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ. It addresses the moral nature of man. Its great appeal is to our sense of worth, our perception of highest worth. The weight of its evidence rests not on some support elaborated by theoretical speculation, but on a judgment of worth.

(Dr. Skeele proceeds to summarize the objections which have been made to this line of argument, and says:)

The main proposition seems sound: viz., knowledge

of the highest truth is gained only by the process of mind in which the moral faculty is predominant. It is objected that this view leaves us in ambiguity and vagueness. It is always the objection made against any higher conception of God. There is nothing so definite as a graven image. Religion without such definiteness is too vague for the idolater. The Romanist deems a religion that fails to tell all about heaven, hell, and purgatory; that does not introduce saints, angels, and demons, and locate its God on the altar of the Church, is too vague for him. (p. 42.)

The Church of Rome claims that all it has promulgated as Christian doctrine has been in the line of a proper development of the faith. Protestant dogmas also have been justified as "a development of the faith". But to turn the truths of Faith into mere intellectual dogmas is hardly to be called a development of the Faith. A development is a growth, which, though adapting itself to its conditions, must ever retain its original principle.

We cannot go back to the conditions of the first age. Its methods and forms were in many respects the products of the time. But we may go back, beyond the Nicene age, beyond the Apostles themselves, back to Christ Himself, to find the genuine principles of the Truth of Faith.

A critic of this movement says: "Their mistake is precisely the opposite of that of Columbus. Columbus thought he had reached the other side of the con-

tinent from which he sailed. In fact, he had discovered a new one. These men have believed that they have discovered and settled upon a wholly new continent. What they have really done is to take possession of the other side of that on which the religions of the world and Christianity have found their hope."

There may be some reason in this criticism; but as long as religious life and thought *grow*, there will always be something to *outgrow*. We can hardly doubt that it will tend to the unity of the Christian world, as well as to the effectiveness of its teaching, when the doctrines of religion are presented much more as the Truth of Faith, and much less as scientific knowledge about the objects of our faith. (p. 49.)

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